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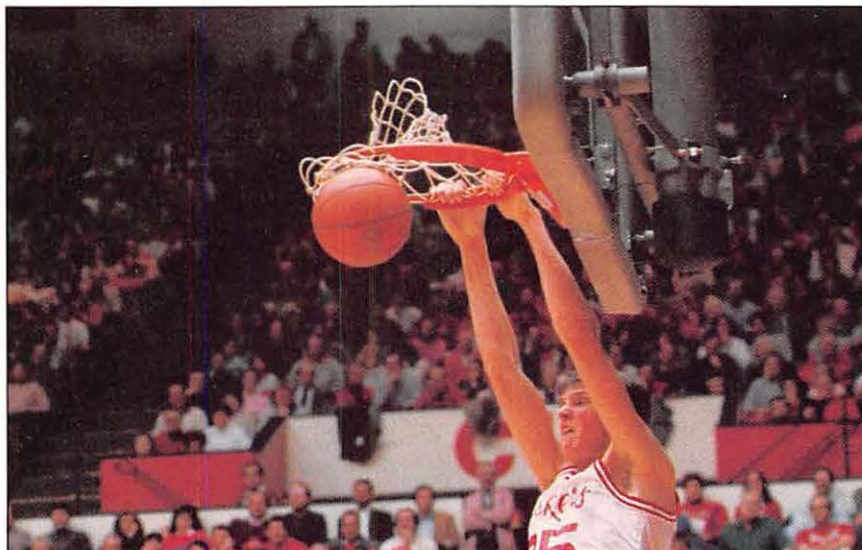
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# CONTENTS

March 1988 ■ Volume 8, Number 3

## Huskers Illustrated



10 **TRAVELING SALESMAN** By Mike Babcock  
NU coaches hustle on the recruiting trail.

13 **MULTI-TALENTED**  
An in-depth look at the 1988 Husker signees.

29 **BAD TO THE BOARDS** By Mark Owens  
Big Eight basketball out-duels football for media attention.

37 **FOOTBALL A.T. (AFTER TOM)**  
A review of where ex-Huskers stand in the NFL.

42 **PLAYER POINT OF VIEW**  
Four key players discuss Nebraska's football future.

6 PUBLISHER'S LETTER

8 LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

18 STATE OF THE HUSKERS/Mark Owens

45 CONFIDENTIALLY/Mike Babcock

46 ASK TOM OSBORNE

On the cover: Photographer John Bills caught KU's Danny Manning and NU's Rich King cheek to cheek in Lincoln.



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## PUBLISHER'S LETTER



Almost eight years have passed since the first issue of *Huskers Illustrated* rolled off the press. During that time a lot of changes have taken place and fortunately the magazine has continued to grow and improve due to the support of all our loyal readers.

My staff and I want to continue on that path of improvement. This issue reflects the beginning of a new direction we've taken with regard to *Huskers Illustrated*.

As we paused to take a hard look at our product, we realized that from an editorial standpoint, we weren't utilizing all of the creative writing talent available to us. In an effort to bring varying viewpoints and fresh writing to our readers, we have gathered a "pool" of gifted and experienced sports writers from throughout Nebraska and the nation to whom we'll turn for the editorial backbone of future issues. We'll alternate, issue to issue, among these writers in an effort to always be creative in what we print. We found, as we contacted these various persons, that each was excited about the prospect and more than willing to participate in our new venture. You'll find the names of these writers in the staff listing on page six, under "Contributing Editors." Our goal is to keep adding names to this list and in that way, prevent our editorial from becoming repetitious.

As we embarked on our new editorial philosophy, we felt we needed, too, a fresh vehicle in which to carry our new cargo. And so, we have greatly changed the look and feel of *Huskers Illustrated*.

You'll find in this issue a different look than you've become accustomed to in the past. We've attempted to bring greater detail and clarity to feature layouts and departments. We're making an effort to include more color photography — in short, we have strived to make it better visually. Our regular departments will remain and we have added a few more. A basketball department will be included in many upcoming issues as well as a comprehensive column on the "State of the Huskers."

We hope that you'll find these many changes as refreshing to look at and read as we found them in the making. I'm looking forward to reading your thoughts and comments on these changes in the coming months. I'm also looking forward to many more seasons and many more issues of *Huskers Illustrated* rolling off the presses.

*Mike Henry*

## Huskers Illustrated

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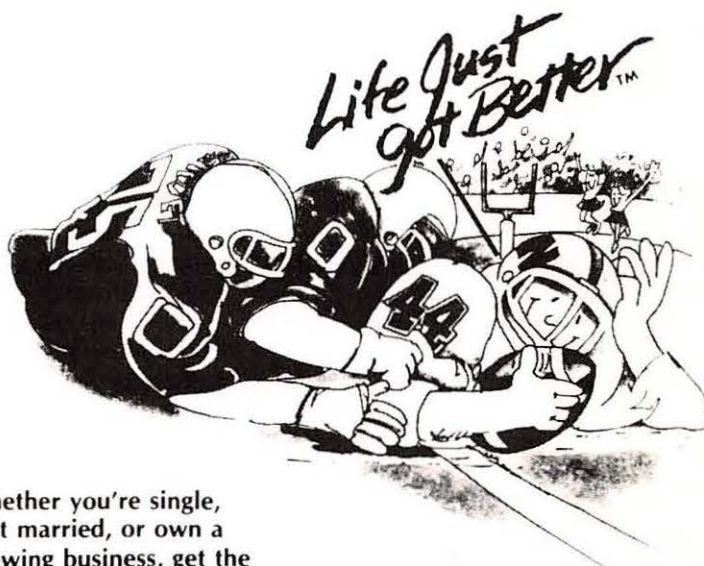
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## LETTERS

### FOUR-YEAR ITCH

Dear Huskers:

Do you realize every fourth year since 1971 Nebraska has entered the Oklahoma game undefeated? All the games were in Norman except this year. The Huskers are 2-3 in these games. In 1971, Nebraska was 10-0 before beating the Sooners, 35-31, in the Game of the Century. In 1975, the Huskers were again 10-0 before losing, 17-14. And in 1983, Nebraska was 11-0 and held off the Sooners, 28-21. Gregory Leth  
Grand Island, Neb.

### SOCK IT TO ME

Dear Huskers:

Where does Keith Jones get those classy, all-red socks that he wears over his calves? I think it looks real neat and classy on the football field. Also, are there any radio stations in the Bakersfield area that carry Nebraska games?

Lowell Pollema  
Shafter, Calif.

Lowell: The red socks are simply baseball-style stirrup socks supplied to players by the Nebraska equipment managers. Concerning radio broadcasts, KIOQ-AM (1030) in Folsom, KDON-AM (1460) in Salinas and KMNY-AM (1600) in Pomona were the California stations that carried Husker football in 1987. Of course, the station lineup could change next season, and you will be able to find a complete list of network stations in *Huskers Illustrated* next September.

### TAPES

Dear Huskers:

I am trying to locate any VHS cassette tapes from the football seasons of 1976-79, with a special interest in the 1978 Nebraska-Oklahoma game. If you could direct me to anyone who sells or has access to such tapes, I would love the address.

I'm trying to find these for a present for my husband, Kerry Weinmaster, who played those years.

Linda Weinmaster  
4025 N.W. 72nd Ave.  
Coral Springs, FL 33065

Linda: Subscribers who have VHS tapes of the above season are encouraged to write, but the guess here is that you'll have a hard time connecting since those were the days of \$1,000 VCRs and \$15 tapes, much more of a luxury then than video equipment is now. Tapes from that era would certainly be collector's items. Good luck.

### PASSED TENSE

Dear Huskers:

Well, at least Nebraska made the Fiesta Bowl record books. They allowed Danny McManus to set a passing record. What is the defensive philosophy behind playing a deep zone and allowing the opponent to catch the ball then tackling him? The other part of one of the worst pass defenses I have ever seen was a complete lack of rush altogether. With the linebackers always dropping back, it really was too much to expect of the outnumbered linemen. McManus had all day long to find his receivers.

Bob Rogan  
Metairie, La.

Bob: There's no simple answer to why FSU passed so well. Philosophically, most teams prefer to make a pass coverage mistake on the safe side. If a receiver's going to catch it, why on earth would anybody want him to catch it behind the coverage? Let's look at the game. First, FSU had great receivers, and they played well. Broderick Thomas was injured. FSU kept its runners in the backfield to block. Nebraska made some physical and mental mistakes. But more than anything, McManus played the game of his life. On third down, especially, he was a marvel. So, another interesting question is, what offensive philosophy do you use to make your quarterback play the best game of his career?

### THE EYES OF TEXAS

Dear Huskers:

First, I would like to thank you for great coverage of another great Husker season. They just missed the Sooners in Lincoln this year, but one

of these days, Dr. Tom and Company will show them who the real Big Red is. They did a fine job of that in 1978-81-82-83, so we know that it's possible. When people complain of Dr. Osborne's record against OU, they should look at his record versus the rest of the nation.

You must admit, it is quite impressive. Dr. Osborne is certainly one of the best coaches in the nation, if not the best, and the day (heaven forbid) he retires or moves on will be a sad day. He has not only carried on a winning tradition, but he has done it cleanly. The NCAA and *Sports Illustrated* both searched for whatever they could and they came up empty handed — a tribute to clean Husker football.

Second, a friend of mine in Corpus Christi, Texas, would like to contact a Texans for Nebraska group in his area. Could you please give me an address that I could relay to him?

Loren Wagner  
Kearney, Neb.

Loren: Phone numbers and addresses for several booster groups are on file here, but none from that area. We'd, therefore, recommend you write to the Nebraska Alumni Association at 1520 'R' Street, Lincoln, NE 68588. They keep track of alumni support groups and may be able to help your friend.

*We want to hear your comments and answer your questions. Please address them to "Letters," P.O. Box 83222, Lincoln, NE 68501. ■*



going heart by-pass surgery, Osborne immediately takes over a pay telephone and begins calling recruits.

"He does that in every restaurant, goes right to a phone," said Pierce. "When the food is brought to the table, you've always got to go find Tom and get him off the phone."

Each spare minute, Osborne is on the telephone. He makes calls while Pierce picks up the rental car, while waiting to board flights. Osborne is indefatigable, according to Pierce. "Tom does a great job," Pierce said. "He never falters. He can keep going from early morning to late at night. It doesn't seem to make any difference. Talk about a guy who really gets after it; Tom gets after it."

"And you follow his example."

This particular Tuesday, the second day of a three-day, whirlwind swing through the Dallas-Fort Worth and New Orleans areas, ends around midnight. Osborne and Pierce have visited seven recruits in six communities.

Their journey began Monday at 6 a.m., in a twin-engine plane, which took them on a 3-hour and 45-minute flight to Waco, Texas, where they visited three recruits and one set of parents.

Pierce has allowed time in the schedule to pick up and return a rental car, which is waiting when they arrive. Then they flew on to Tyler, Texas.

"It was a beautiful day to fly, gorgeous," said Pierce.

During the 47-minute flight from Waco to Tyler, Osborne gazes down on the ponds that dot the Texas landscape and "thinks about all those fish in them," Pierce said. "You can tell that's what he's thinking. I'm just worrying about make the next visit on time."

They visit three recruits in the Tyler area, spending approximately an hour and a half with each one. They finish at 4:30 p.m.

"We've got a 7 o'clock meeting in Mesquite, Texas, on the other side of Dallas, and we're landing at Love Field," said Pierce.

Love Field is near downtown. Mesquite is on the far eastern edge of Dallas. By design, a rental car is again waiting.

**When Tom Osborne's on the recruiting trail, he's always trying to reach out and touch someone.**



They drive to Mesquite, fighting rush-hour traffic and stopping briefly at the Marriott Park Central to check in and leave their bags. The Park Central, in north Dallas, is strategically located, right next to the interstate highway system "so you can jump on and quickly get where you want to go," said Pierce, who leaves nothing to chance.

"James" is ready for their arrival. He takes care of everything.

Pierce has established several such contacts, people willing to do a little extra to keep him on schedule. "Pat" at the New Orleans Hilton, "Bob" at American Airlines in Omaha, "Pam" at the Avis rental car desk at New Orleans International Airport.

"Those kind of people are important," said Pierce. "I know two or three of them every place I go to recruit. I know they're going to take care of me and make things as nice as they possibly can."

Usually they become Cornhusker fans, an attitude Pierce encourages with Nebraska tee-shirts "so they can relate to the program. They're always kidding me, 'Why don't you recruit this kid from my hometown?' They like to talk about the kids you're recruiting."

"They can make you feel good."

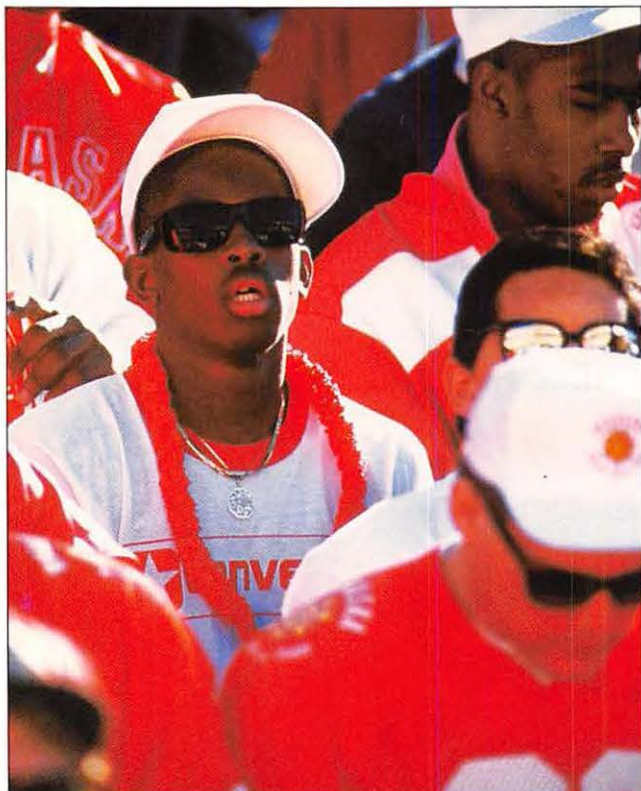
One of the most important support people is LeAnn Rickert, the travel agent who books everything from flights to rental cars. "We couldn't do without LeAnn. I tell her where I have to be, and she gets everything set," Pierce said. "LeAnn's the key to a lot of things. All the coaches have to move around an awful lot, and things change so quickly, you've got to be able to adjust."

Osborne and Pierce make two home visits in Mesquite before heading back to the Marriott Park Central. It is 10:30 p.m. and all they've had to eat were doughnuts and granola bars, snack foods, during the early-morning flight from Nebraska to Waco.

"It's hard for Tom to see everyone if you don't keep rolling," Pierce said. "A lot of times you forget to eat. You honestly forget until about 9 or 10 o'clock at night. You're trying to get from school to school, and there are a lot of delays."

Pierce returns to the Marriott for Osborne, who orders room service and works some more on recruiting, then drives to Birraporetti's, an Italian restaurant located on the Central Expressway, "my favorite spaghetti place," said Pierce.





**Nebraska returned this winter to Louisiana, where the Huskers signed Mickey Joseph in 1987.**

"Roy" has a table for him.

Birraporetti's is his favorite restaurant in Dallas. But he also likes On the Border in Dallas as well as Bennigan's and TGI Friday's, which can be found in several cities where Pierce recruits. "I know those places make Tom a little nervous because the music's so loud. But they're good standbys," he said.

The opportunity to eat in such places is one of the few benefits of recruiting travel. Pierce has established guidelines for what he'll eat, depending on where he is. "You eat spaghetti in Dallas, but in New Orleans you have to eat red beans and rice. If you don't you've done something wrong," he said.

In any case, he and Osborne have visited eight recruits in three communities on Monday. The trip is off to a good start.

The next day begins with the drive to Ennis.

The third and final day of the swing starts at 5 a.m. Osborne and Pierce leave the Marriott Park Central at 5:45 and drive to Love Field, where they catch the 6:50 a.m. flight to New Orleans.

Pierce books flights on American Airlines whenever he can. "It's the best in the country," he said.

They land at New Orleans International Airport at 8:30 a.m. "Pam" has

a rental car and smile waiting. Their first stop is at a high school in downtown New Orleans, where they meet with a recruit and his parents. Next, they cross the river into Marrero, La., to talk with the father of a recruit at his place of business, then they visit the player at Archbishop Shaw High, the school from which Nebraska recruited redshirted freshman quarterback Mickey Joseph, a *Parade Magazine* All-American. By the time they get back in the car and head north, across the vast expanse of Lake Pontchartrain, it's 12:30 p.m.

"Again, this is an opportunity for Tom to think fishing. I know he's going to hit up all the locals for fishing lore," said Pierce.

When Osborne and Pierce get to the high school in Ponchatoula, La., the recruit with whom they are to visit is busy talking to another coach. "At some schools you've got to take a number just to see a kid," Pierce said.

They pass the time by touring the school's weight room and talking to the player's football coach. Eventually, they get to talk to the recruit and his mom.

The next stop is Baton Rouge. They'd like to steal a player out from under Louisiana State University, which is located there.

Their hectic travel schedule has be-

gun to take its toll. "I can see Tom dozing," Pierce recalls. "So I take a few winks, too, while we're driving up. I don't want him to see me sleeping."

Not really, of course. Pierce laughs.

"The wear and tear on your body is almost abusive," he said. "People say, 'You can sleep on the airplane.' Well, I can sleep on a plane, but that's not quality sleep."

Pierce has plenty of opportunity. He estimates that last season he logged nearly 125,000 air miles on recruiting trips. Because of new NCAA rules that limit the recruiting season, that number was down this year, but only slightly. Pierce says the tradeoff is, "my kids got to know me this year. Last year, they didn't."

He and Osborne stop at a service station on the edge of Baton Rouge and telephone the recruit for directions to his home. "He told us he'd come and get us, rescue us from our map dilemma," said Pierce.

The recruit in Baton Rouge is the 19th Osborne and Pierce have visited in less than three days. Now they have to return to New Orleans International Airport to catch an 8 p.m. flight back to Dallas. They arrive in plenty of time. They finally eat, and Osborne is back on the telephone. He's talking to a recruit when the final boarding call is made.

Osborne always seems to have one more call to make.

"The plane's ready, and I'm getting on," Pierce tells Osborne.

"Tom just makes it," Pierce said. "He always does."

Osborne and Pierce part company in Dallas. Osborne boards another flight, which will take him to Tulsa, Okla., where he'll go with another Cornhusker assistant to visit recruits.

The daily routine will continue.

"Tom starts all over with a new guy," said Pierce. "I'm going to retrace my steps (in Texas) and get to the schools we didn't get to."

The first order of business, however, is getting something to eat. Pierce drives to Birraporetti's. "I eat big now because Tom's not around," he said. "I get back to the hotel about 11:30 p.m. Thursday morning, you start all over." ■



# Multi-Talented

NU SIGNED AN AMBIDEXTROUS CLASS OF RECRUITS — ATHLETES WHO CAN PLAY OFFENSE OR DEFENSE. AND THEY CAN *PLAY*.

The Traveler has come to Nebraska.

Surely you remember The Traveler — the mythical monster in the movie "Ghostbusters" who almost wiped out Dan Aykroyd, Bill Murray and Harold Ramis when he appeared as the Stay Puft Marshmallow Man. It was the pick-your-poison routine. Nasty old Gozar the Gozarian told the three Casper Catchers to "choose and perish," and that they could actually pick the form of The Traveler. As Murray would say, "Very cute. So, if we think of J. Edgar Hoover, then J. Edgar Hoover will appear and destroy us." Right, only this time Aykroyd went off half-cocked and dreamed up the awesome 500-foot marshmallow sailor.

Nebraska's football recruiting class of 1988 is full of Travelers.

Perhaps more than any recruiting class during the Tom Osborne era, this year's group features more "athlete" prospects, the kind of players who have the size and speed to play anywhere from cornerback, free safety, strong safety, I-back, fullback to even defensive end. Half of the linemen could play either offense or defense. Come next August, Husker coaches will have to start choosing the form of their Travelers.

What's left to be seen is whether Nebraska foes will perish under the future assault of these young men (24 high schoolers and two junior college transfers), in whatever final form they take. Looking at their honors and awards, some recruiting watchers may doubt it. Nebraska's 1988 haul generally was rated in everybody's Top 10, but Omaha defensive tackle Dave Jensen was the only super-star player landed, at least as far as ratings are concerned. The six-foot-five, 265-

pound Creighton Preper was a consensus pick as one of the top dozen or so athletes in America.

What made it solid was getting solid kids at priority positions: defensive tackle, defensive back and tight end.

Joining Jensen as hot prospects at tackle are Jeremiah Clark, Kevin Ramaekers, Scott Peterson, Jamie Liewer, Victor Stachmas and possibly even juco immigrant Junior Monarrez.

Like Jensen, Ramaekers (6-3, 265) already has varsity size, but the Norfolk Catholic product also could get a look in the offensive line. Since Nebraska graduated its three top defensive tackles this year, there's a real chance he could begin his Husker career as a Blackshirt. He's the second-strongest (with a 350-pound bench press) of the high schoolers (Jensen has a 365-pound BP to his credit).

Clark (6-4, 220), from Mesa, Ariz., was a pass rushing phenom and fits the Neil Smith mold: tall, fast, but

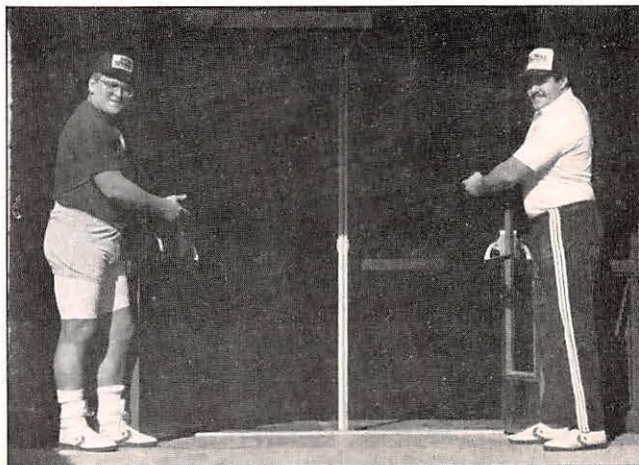
rather slender out of high school. He'll have to gobble a bucket-full of Clark Bars before he's big enough.

Peterson's a lot the same. Going 6-5 and 225, he was considered the best offensive lineman in Arizona, where he played for Peoria and has the talent for defense. And get this, Liewer is also 6-5 and 220. Clark, Peterson and Liewer all run the 40-yard dash in only 4.7 seconds, and that must certainly have defensive line coach Charlie McBride dreaming about clones of the All-American Smith.

Monarrez, from Cerritos (Calif.) Junior College, is the strongest recruit (with a 440-pound BP) and was a two-time juco All-American as a noseguard. Yeah, but, defensive tackle is only a few feet away.

The list goes on. Victor Stachmas (6-6, 240) out of McAlester, Okla., is another candidate that could contribute early at defensive tackle because of fine strength and hand action. He played both offense and defense in high school. But perhaps the most fascinating prospect at DT is Anaheim,

**Returning offensive line starters, Bob Sledge (left) and Randy Keeler, opened holes for Husker backs last fall. This winter they're helping welcome the 1988 signees.**





Calif., linebacker Mike Petko (6-3, 230), who was Nebraska's only true linebacker recruit. Just consider the possibilities. He has the size (by adding a few more pounds) to play tackle and even better speed than Smith.

With the inking of tight end William Washington (6-3, 235) out of Tyler, Tex., Nebraska is setting itself up for a natural progression of outstanding players at that position. Now that Tom Banderas will probably pursue a pro career, Todd Millikan appears set for an all-star senior campaign, and 1987 All-American signee Dan Lohmeire seems to be healthy again.

But who knows? Remember, Millikan came to Nebraska as a linebacker before being switched, and Washington was an all-district defensive end, too.

While the Huskers have eight guys who could do damage at DT, there are actually more signees (nine) who have defensive back tools. New Jersey DBs Scott Baldwin and Ernie Beler could play almost any of the four secondary positions. Steve Camer of Wahoo and Darin Duin of Fargo, N.D., both fit the same mold; all are in the 190-pound range and have excellent speed. Trouble is, they were all outstanding running backs in high school and could easily catch the eye of backfield coach Frank Solich.

Or how about Bart James of Arizona and Mike Grant of Florida? James goes 6-1 and 190 while Grant's at 6-2 and 200. Both were top-notch quarterbacks and defensive backs in high school. Unofficially, it looks like Grant will focus on QB first while James heads for the secondary.

But Nebraska did land some DB specialists. Coffeyville (Kansas) Junior College transfer Bruce Pickens has great speed at cornerback, plus Tyrone Leggette and Tyrone Byrd look to be solid defensive back material. Never mind that Byrd also played quarterback as a senior and Leggette rushed for 1,580 yards as a tailback last year.

That abundance of talent should help, considering secondary coach George Darlington could field as many as three senior starters next fall, and replacements for the future and

immediate depth will be needed.

Plus, who's going to replace Chris Drennan in two years? Forgot to mention that James is an outstanding place kicker.

Another presto-chango signee is Hurst, Tex., running back Andre McDuffy, who has the speed and strength to play either I-back or fullback.

However, Nebraska did sign some players who are definitely specialists. Kansas player-of-the-year Lance Lewis is a fullback with both speed and strength (nearly a 60-foot throw in the shot put along with 4.6 quickness).

Tyrone Hughes was voted by one newspaper as the Louisiana offensive player-of-the-year and will concentrate on wingback for the Huskers. Jon Bostick was the Washington player-of-the-year and could help quickly at split end. Travis Hill and David White look like prototypical defensive ends, if White can just forget that he played tight end last year as a senior.

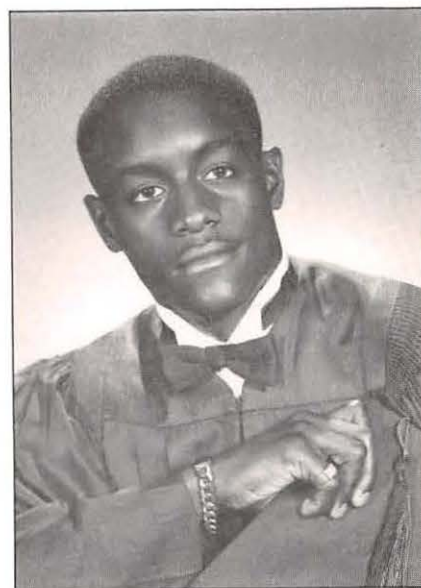
Jason Daniel of Midland, Tex., and Chris Ybarra of Fontana, Calif., were considered among the best offensive linemen in their respective states, and they're good bets to stay on offense.

All told, Nebraska landed six athletes who were either named the best player in their state or the best player at their position in the state.

Plus, a freshman frenzy has hit. After rookies Mike Croel, Tahaun Lewis and Reggie Cooper all lettered and saw extensive action last season, the signees of 1988 generally bubbled about their chances of contributing next fall. And that's not so wild an idea. Those four 1987 All-American signees (Lohmeire, Leodis Flowers, Mickey Joseph and Nate Turner) all redshirted while three underpublicized teammates suited up for road games.

That could be the story of the 1988 class, a bunch of guys who pale in comparison to Notre Dame's All-Press Clipping signees, but also a bunch of guys who are multi-talented enough to quickly choose a position and make a name for themselves as the Traveler Squad. ■

## 1988 Nebraska Cornhusker Football Recruits



### SCOTT BALDWIN

**School:** Abraham Clark

**City:** Roselle, N.J.

**Position:** RB-DB

**Height:** 6-2

**Weight:** 190

**Speed:** 4.4

**Benchpress:** 325

**Years started:** 3 (3 letters)

**Birthdate:** Sept. 1, 1969

**Parent:** Hattie Baldwin

**Hobbies/special interests:** fishing

**Academic interest:** architecture

**1987 team record:** 4-5

**On the field:** Scott was all-state, all-county, all-metro and all-conference. He was both a running back and defensive back. He rushed for 1,368 yards and led the county in scoring with 122 points. Rushed for a school-record 368 yards and five TDs against North Plainfield. As a junior, he rushed for over 1,000 yards. As a sophomore, he was the second-team quarterback but became the No. 1 halfback when the starter was injured.

**Other sports:** In track, Baldwin is the defending conference champ in the 400 with an indoor time of 50.49, and he is expected to challenge for state titles this spring in the 60, 200 and 400.

**Why Nebraska?** "After the tour, I



knew I wanted to go there. The school had everything I wanted. Lincoln's a great town, too."

**Other choices:** Miami, Oklahoma, Florida State

**Coach Lou Grasso says:** "Scott's a very dedicated athlete. He broke every record in school history. We played him at a different position on defense almost every week because people would try to run away from him. We played him at safety, defensive end and even middle linebacker."

**Gillespie says:** "Great size and speed. Scott's a multi-dimensional player with great balance and aggressiveness. He can play either offense or defense."

#### **ERNIE BELER**

(Pronounced BEE-ler)

**School:** Bayonne

**City:** Bayonne, N.J.

**Position:** RB-DB

**Height:** 5-10

**Weight:** 190

**Speed:** 4.5

**Benchpress:** 250

**Years started:** 3 (3 letters)

**Birthdate:** Dec. 5, 1968

**Parent:** Robert Towns

**Hobbies/special interests:** fishing, dancing, jogging

**Academic interest:** undecided

**1987 team record:** 10-1

**On the field:** two-time, All-State and three-time all-league. Beler played running back, safety and linebacker for the Bees and was considered one of the most ferocious hitters in New Jersey. Named as Defensive Back of the Year in New Jersey. Was the third-leading scorer in the state with 23 TDs. Beler averaged over eight yards per carry while rushing for over 1,000 yards, and also returned kicks.

**Other sports:** basketball and baseball. He's generally regarded as the basketball team's best defender.

**Why Nebraska?** "They have a fine program for my needs, and it's a great all-around school. Plus, it gives me a chance to play for a great football program."

**Other choices:** Penn State

**Coach Don Ahern says:** "Ernie's the best I've ever seen, period, end of quote. We have a tremendous football

program and have a lot of pride in what we've done. Ernie has taken us a notch higher. The only reason everybody in the country wasn't knocking down the door is because he has dyslexia. There's a chance he could be a Prop 48. But, he's worked very hard to overcome it. Athletically, nobody in our area can touch him. He was a man among boys at the high school level. He's a stud."

**Gillespie says:** "Ernie's tough. An impact player. He could be a great running back, but should also be a great strong safety."



#### **JON BOSTICK**

**School:** Interlake

**City:** Bellevue, Wash.

**Position:** SE

**Height:** 6-2

**Weight:** 185

**Speed:** 4.5

**Benchpress:** 250

**Years started:** 2 (2 letters)

**Birthdate:** Oct. 4, 1969

**Parents:** Jan and Celia Bostick

**Hobbies/special interests:** tennis, golf

**Academic interests:** undecided

**1987 team record:** 8-1

**On the field:** Bostick was rated among the Top 50 players in the Far West by *Super Prep* and was named Player of the Year in Washington. Led the state in scoring with 20 TDs and 120 points. He caught 39 passes for 814 yards (20.9 average) and 16 TDs as a senior. Three times last year he scored

four TDs in a game. Also returned a pair of kickoffs for 99- and 78-yard scores, plus he returned two punts for TDs. Also played cornerback.

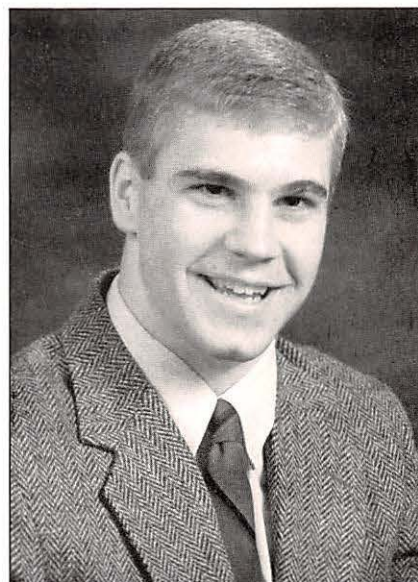
**Other sports:** In basketball, Bostick is Interlake's starting point guard and averages about 10 points a game. In track, he has the run the 300 hurdles in 39.3 seconds.

**Why Nebraska?** "I really liked Coach Osborne — he was so personable. Plus, I was raised in Minnesota, so I was very familiar with what Nebraska's all about."

**Other choices:** Washington, Washington St., Texas Tech

**Coach Roley Robbins says:** "We've got a great tradition here, and Jon has added to it. I think he can make an impact early, maybe on the specialty teams. He's very versatile, and really never came off the field."

**Gillespie says:** "I wouldn't be surprised if Jon makes a contribution within his first couple of years."



#### **STEVE CARMER**

**School:** Wahoo

**City:** Wahoo, Neb.

**Position:** DB

**Height:** 6-1

**Weight:** 190

**Speed:** 4.6

**Benchpress:** 250

**Years started:** 4 (4 letters)

**Birthdate:** Aug. 26, 1969

**Parents:** Phil and Carol Carmer

**Hobbies/special interests:** art, caring



for pet snakes and lizards

**Academic interest:** undecided

**1987 team record:** 10-1

**On the field:** two-time, all-state performer. Carmer gained 1,554 yards rushing and 255 receiving as a senior and scored 20 TDs, averaging 8.2 yards per attempt. On defense, he made 65 tackles, blocked three kicks and returned one interception 65 yards for a TD. Also punted for a 35.4 average. Versatile athlete who could play anywhere from linebacker to running back to strong safety.

**Other sports:** In basketball, Carmer was all-state as a junior. Also runs track and has a personal best of 10.6 in the 100. His team did not keep 40 times in football.

**Why Nebraska?** "Everyone treated me so well and just made me feel very comfortable."

**Other choices:** Kentucky

**Coach Dick Tinglehoff** says: "Even though Steve's got great technique, he still knows what to do when things break down, and that comes from natural ability and instinct. He's got enough ability to play end, safety, cornerback or running back."

**Gillespie** says: "Steve's a multi-talented athlete who could play a number of positions, but we'll take a look at him first at safety."

## TYRONE BYRD

**School:** Chandler

**City:** Chandler, Ariz.

**Position:** DB

**Height:** 6-0

**Weight:** 175

**Speed:** 4.5

**Benchpress:** 315

**Years started:** 3 (3 letters)

**Birthdate:** Feb. 12, 1970

**Parent:** Sabrina Byrd

**Hobbies/special interests:** movies, dancing

**Academic interest:** business

**1987 team record:** 3-7

**On the field:** Regional Defensive Player of the Year. All-State and all-Region. Played safety and also started at quarterback. Was starting halfback as a junior. Had eight interceptions as a senior. As a QB, he rushed for 355 yards on 105 carries for four TDs. Completed 59 of 102 passes for 834

yards and eight TDs. Also returned 14 kickoffs for 268 yards. Considered one of the state's most deadly hitters. Injuries were a problem — not for him, but the players he tackled. Actually hospitalized several opponents with clean hits.

**Other sports:** In track, Byrd ran on the state champion 400 meter relay team.

**Why Nebraska?** "It's obviously one of the best programs in the country. The players and coaches were great on my visit. I just love it."

**Other choices:** Arizona, Arizona State  
**Coach Delvin Schutes** says: "Tyrone was it for us. He's an outstanding young man with great athletic ability. He's a tremendous hitter and success follows him wherever he goes."

**Gillespie** says: "Tyrone has very good range in the defensive secondary. Very good athletic ability."

## JEREMIAH CLARK

**School:** Mesa

**City:** Mesa, Ariz.

**Position:** DT

**Height:** 6-4

**Weight:** 230

**Speed:** 4.7

**Benchpress:** 300

**Years started:** 2 (2 letters)

**Birthdate:** Aug. 20, 1970

**Parent:** LeAnn Clark

**Academic interest:** undecided

**1987 team record:** 7-3

**On the field:** Clark was a quarterback-sacking terror. Registered 19 QB dumps as a senior to lead the state. Was named All-State and area Defensive Player of the Year. Played as a down end. All told, Clark made 90 total tackles and blocked four kicks as a senior playing for one of Arizona's largest schools. Against defending state champ Dobson, he registered three QB sacks, and in another game had three sacks, a blocked field goal (which he returned for 30 yards) and an extra-point reception. He played tight end in short-yardage situations.

**Other sports:** basketball and track.  
**Why Nebraska?** "The tradition of Academic All-Americans was impressive. And I liked what Neil Smith was able to do over his career. Some

people might have thought it would be tough to leave Arizona, but I am originally from California, so the loyalty to stay here wasn't that big a deal."

**Other choices:** Arizona, Arizona State  
**Coach Jim Rattay** says: "He's a great pass rusher. He played with a lot of intensity and quickness, and Jeremiah was the focal point of our defense. We had to move him around because people ran away from him. People would try to check off at the line once they saw where he was."

**Gillespie** says: "His big asset is quickness. Jeremiah is an outstanding pass rusher with good instincts for getting to the quarterback."



## JASON DANIEL

**School:** Lee

**City:** Midland, Tex.

**Position:** OL

**Height:** 6-3

**Weight:** 230

**Speed:** 4.7

**Benchpress:** 300

**Years started:** 1 (2 letters)

**Birthdate:** Dec. 15, 1969

**Parent:** Fred Daniel

**Hobbies/special interests:** golf, racquetball, music

**Academic interest:** dentistry

**1987 team record:** 11-1

**On the field:** All-South Plains and All-District. Very consistent blocker on team that had four linemen sign to play Division I football. From the



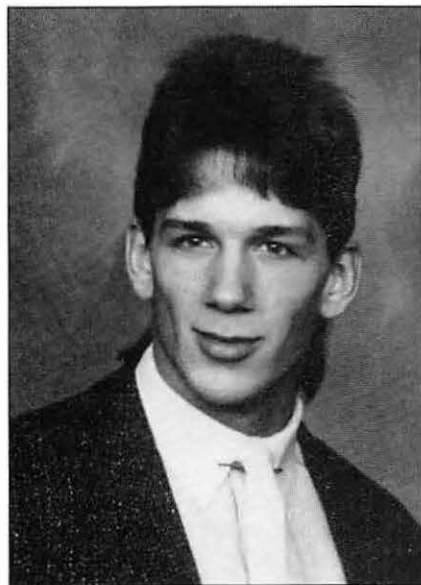
same school as current Husker starting center Jake Young. Easily the fastest lineman on his team on either side of the ball.

**Other sports:** none

**Why Nebraska?** "I felt like it was one of the best schools in the country for both football and academics, plus you're practically guaranteed of going to a big-time bowl every year."

**Other choices:** Oklahoma, Baylor  
**Coach Earl Miller says:** "Personally, I think he's one of the best linemen in the state of Texas. He's a very smart kid with a lot of desire, and he's willing to work. He'll do whatever it takes to be the best. Jason will need to grow a little, but I'm sure he'll put on the muscle in due time."

**Gillespie says:** "Jason has excellent feet, and he's got the build that will allow him to get bigger without losing his speed, which is outstanding."



**DARIN D. DUIN**

**School:** South  
**City:** Fargo, N.D.  
**Position:** DB  
**Height:** 6-2  
**Weight:** 190  
**Speed:** 4.4  
**Benchpress:** 280  
**Years started:** 3 (3 letters)  
**Birthdate:** March 21, 1970  
**Parents:** Dennis and Cora Duin  
**Hobbies/special interests:** lifting weights  
**Academic interest:** psychology,

counseling

**1987 team record:** 12-0, state champions

**On the field:** Duin played split end as a senior and caught 28 passes for 495 yards, the second-highest total in school history. Named North Dakota Player of the Year by *USA Today*. All-State and all-conference plus honorable mention All-American by National High School Coaches Association. Rushed 165 times as a senior for 993 yards, third best ever at South. Also played cornerback, leading team with three interceptions. Played fullback as a junior and rushed for over 1,000 yards, primarily as a blocker. Once scored five touchdowns in one half. Against Fargo West as a senior, he scored four TDs (two running, two receiving) while touching the ball only seven times. South has now won back-to-back, unbeaten state titles and Duin has experienced only two football losses since the seventh grade.

**Other sports:** In track, Duin ran a 22.12 in the 200 meters and 48.5 in the 400 as a sophomore. Didn't run as a junior because of foot injury. Plans to compete again this spring.

**Why Nebraska?** "There's such a great football atmosphere here. Everyone was really nice to me and rolled out the red carpet. Since the seventh or eighth grade, I don't think I've missed a Nebraska game on TV, and I liked the campus."

**Other choices:** North Dakota, Iowa State, Wisconsin, Wyoming

**Coach Dale Hertel says:** "Darin's probably the most talented player I've ever coached in 17 years. His size, speed, strength and heart make him a great player with unlimited potential and versatility. He can play any position and excel at it."

**Gillespie says:** "Darin has excellent quickness, a very aggressive player."

**MIKE GRANT**

**School:** Brandon  
**City:** Brandon, Fla.  
**Position:** QB  
**Height:** 6-2  
**Weight:** 205  
**Speed:** 4.6  
**Benchpress:** 260



**Years started:** 3 (3 letters)

**Birthdate:** Jan. 26, 1970

**Parents:** James and Barbara Grant

**Hobbies/special interests:** drawing, creative writing

**Academic interests:** business or journalism

**1987 team record:** 6-4

**On the field:** Grant was rated by *Prep Score* as the No. 4 quarterback in the Southeast (six-state region) and the No. 38 prospect overall. *Super Prep* rated him as one of the Top 35 players in the South. Grant, in his three years as a starter, ran for 1,436 yards and passed for 3,154. Brandon ran the I his first two years, then switched to the wishbone. All-conference as a sophomore in one of the toughest leagues in the Southeast.

**Other sports:** In basketball, Grant starts at both guard and forward, averaging about 10 points per game.

**Why Nebraska?** "I wanted to have a chance to play quarterback, and Nebraska was willing to let me make the choice. Other schools didn't think my opinion seemed to matter. Plus, I really like the people. Steve Taylor was my host in Lincoln, and I had a great time."

**Other choices:** Purdue

**Coach Larry Bass says:** "Let me put it this way — we were 25-9 for three years, and we would have been going 1-9 or 2-8 without Mike Grant. We play in a district that has produced

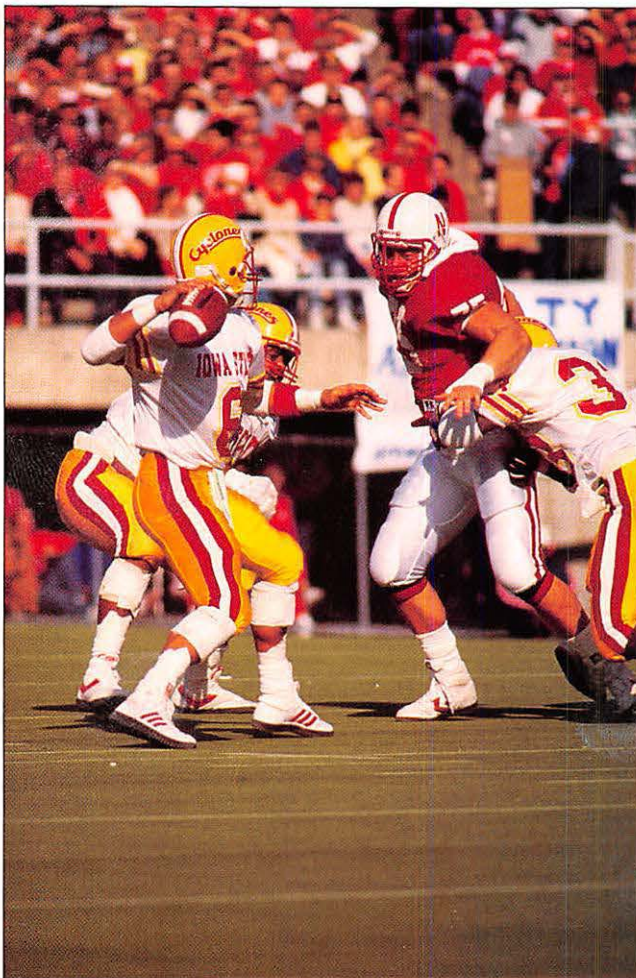
*continued on page 23*



Mark Owens

# Unassisted Tackles

THREE SENIORS SINGLE-HANDEDLY DOMINATED NEBRASKA'S DEFENSIVE INTERIOR LAST YEAR. NOW THEY'RE GONE.



Entering his junior year, Ray Valladao (75) will hold the key to Nebraska's future at defensive tackle, where he is the most experienced prospect.

For the first time since 1984, Nebraska will enter the football season without a potential All-American among its defensive down linemen. It is a sobering thought. If the Cornhuskers are to make another serious run at the national championship (against another tough non-conference slate), the Black Shirts will be the key.

Two of the three seniors that Nebraska loses (Neil Smith and Tim Rother) both have a good chance at being early NFL draft picks. The third veteran, Lee Jones, would surprise nobody if he went in the late rounds as a linebacker prospect. The Cornhuskers haven't had this kind of talent since 1971, when senior DT Larry Jacobson won the Outland Trophy, junior noseguard Rich Glover earned his first All-American stripes and sophomore DT John Dutton lettered for Bob Devaney two years before also becoming an all-star.

But unlike 1971 which had its talent spaced over three classes, no Husker team has bled so profusely from one position as NU will this year with the loss of its three senior tackles.

How does the future look? Who will step forward? Will Nebraska be susceptible to the inside running



game which could keep the ball away from its outstanding offense?

The situation is not as bleak as it looks at first glance.

First, Nebraska's defense returns several proven stars. Left end Broderick Thomas is a cinch to repeat as All-American. Strong-side linebacker LeRoy Etienne will be the best linebacker in the Big Eight in 1988 and might have been the second-best last year. Charles Fryar was probably the best cornerback in the league in 1987, but he didn't make All-Big Eight because post-season all-star teams honored "defensive backs," and the conference was loaded with great safeties last year.

This contrasts with Oklahoma, which loses five superstars with multiple years of starting experience on defense.

Certainly, the Sooners will have talented and highly touted athletes to fill those positions, but their experience is limited. More than anything, the youngish Oklahomans will be hungry.

But so will Nebraska's stars. It's highly unlikely that Thomas will coast through his senior year and become satisfied with his reputation because he still hasn't lived up to his personal expectations of being the best player in college football. Etienne is *always* hungry for success. These two veterans will help take some pressure off Nebraska's tackles, all of whom look to be young and inexperienced.

Plus, there is no guarantee that a star will not eventually shine at noseguard, another position that could support young tackles. In spring practice, whoever gets the No. 1 noseguard spot will have survived nothing less than a street fight. Lawrence Pete, Mike Murray, Willie Griffin and juco transfer Junior Monarrez will be the top candidates. In fact, the emergence of a dominating noseguard, the kind that forces people to double-team him, would greatly ease the pressure at tackle.

Danny Noonan was a prime example of what a great noseguard could do. During his All-American season of 1986, he was double-covered every week, and this helped Chris Spach-

**Tyreese Knox (34) will try to pull away from other I-backs and land the starter's job next year.**



man, Jones and Smith (both juniors at the time). Some experts contend he was responsible for most of Nebraska's success in shutting down Oklahoma that year because a Sooner guard was always teaming with center Travis Simpson to flail at Noonan. In 1987, the Nebraska nose position got single blocking and OU's guards could blast through the line to harass linebackers.

So, grooming a dangerous player at noseguard will be as high a priority as finding tackles.

Who will be those tackles? Ray Valladao will go into the 1988 season as a junior and Nebraska's most experienced tackle; he played in every game. Valladao served mostly as relief man for Nebraska's starting tackles and finished with nine total tackles. He's considered a solid prospect, probably the best bet to start at left tackle. After spring practice in 1987, Defensive Coordinator Charlie McBride handed Valladao (6-3, 250)

a glowing report card. He's overcome some grade problems and actually paid his own way one year while correcting the situation. Back in the coaches' good graces, Valladao should be highly motivated, and stardom may be in the young man's future because he has the best athletic tools of all comers.

Everyone else is frightfully inexperienced. Kent Wells (6-4, 295) will be a junior after rising as high as No. 3 at the left tackle slot in 1987. He was switched by McBride from noseguard. Again, he's got fine physical ability and good size.

On the right side, Paul Brungardt (6-6, 250) has tons of potential, according to McBride, but his strength and experience aren't on a big-time level, yet. He played sparingly in 1987 for the varsity and increased his reps by playing some for the freshman team.

One fascinating possibility would be to try Prop 48 victim Tim Herman





**Ken Clark (32) emerged as a strong candidate at I-back in 1987 and again in 1988**

(6-6, 245) at tackle. He played line-backer at Lincoln Southeast and has 4.8 speed. However, he won't be able to compete in spring practice because of NCAA rules, even though his grades seem to be in order. Any help from Herman would come only after fall drills begin, and Prop 48 players across America have generally proven slow in catching up after a year without any football activity.

And by the time people like Herman are considered in the fray, the pool of candidates gets very young. Leander Anderson was the leading tackler (29 stops) for the junior varsity last year. Joe Sims has fine speed and potential but was slowed by a knee injury last fall. Brian Brown has a great frame and plenty of potential. Both Sims and Brown were true freshmen in 1987. Another true freshman, Wayne Keneipp, enrolled this semester after injuring both shoulders early in fall drills. He went home to Chicago for surgery and rehabilita-

tion. With a 400-pound bench press to his credit, he was the strongest of the 1987 scholarship recruits.

On top of that, Nebraska landed several top high school players this winter, and it's possible some could help with depth as freshmen, most notably Dave Jensen out of Omaha Creighton Prep. He already has the size (6-5, 265) and strength (365 bench press) to make an immediate impact. Kevin Ramaekers (6-3, 265) out of Norfolk Catholic might also help with the varsity.

The unsettling point is that all these young players must still be labeled "potential" contributors. Realistically, some great prospects will prove to be busts every year at every school in the country. Nebraska is no different. But the odds seem to be with Coach Tom Osborne because there are so many talented players who will vie for playing time at the defensive tackle spots. Valladao should be solid, but finding another

starter and quality depth is critical. This concern plus the developments at I-back and fullback will be key issues for spring practice.

Nebraska's short-range needs may be filled more quickly than most people think.

Long-term concerns, however, certainly became clearer after this winter's recruiting season. And one has to wonder how Nebraska coaches can physically work any harder to get talented athletes in Lincoln as pressures mount to keep them away.

Osborne and staff face some major hurdles. With only four of 26 signees coming from Nebraska high schools, the Cornhuskers had to comb the country for talent — a time-and money-consuming feat — and the NCAA has cut back dramatically on the amount of time a college recruiter can be on the road looking at prospects. Because Nebraska is situated in a sparsely populated area, Husker coaches now have much less room for error than coaches, say, in Southern California or Texas, where they can visit dozens of top prospects in a single day. Even though the rule change by the NCAA was designed to save money for schools, it definitely works to Nebraska's disadvantage.

Next year, the NCAA will limit head coaches to only one in-person visit per recruit. This could be devastating for Nebraska. Osborne may hesitate to say that he is a critical influence on prospects, but on-campus recruiter Dave Gillespie does not. After Nebraska landed All-American quarterback Mickey Joseph in 1987, Gillespie explained why NU was able to outduel Oklahoma: "It was Coach Osborne."

His influence is powerful. Time and again, this year's signees raved about Osborne, his philosophies and appeal. His impact on parents may be even greater, and he said after signing day that many times the Huskers must recruit the mothers and fathers as hard as they do the sons. It has not been uncommon in the past for Osborne to visit a prospect's home four or five times.

Now, he becomes a limited resource. NU must have an Osborne





Nebraska's offense should be prolific in 1988 because of its returning talent, including Dana Brinson (33) and Bill Hudson (70).



strategy. When will he visit? Early, in an effort to lock in a verbal commitment? Late, to steal a star from competitors? How much more emphasis should he receive on on-campus visits? Or, do the Huskers simply put more emphasis on the assistant coaches?

The long-term impact on Nebraska's recruiting success is a question

mark, but the rule change certainly does not favor the Huskers.

Also of concern this winter has been the increased raiding by neighboring schools to get Nebraska's second-tier high school players, the kind who often walk on and later become stars. Iowa State, Wyoming and other schools were busy. ISU landed four Nebraskans on scholarship and

Wyoming got seven.

"I'd say one-third of our traveling squad this year was made up of players who originally walked on here," says Osborne. "Some people probably think that our scholarship players are automatically going to become starters. And I'd say that probably 70 percent of them do by the end of their careers. But it's not that different with our walkons. Of the top 10 or 15 walkons, probably 50 percent of them will be starters before they're done. So, the walkon program is definitely important, and I'm concerned about area players passing us up to take scholarships with other schools."

What will Nebraska do? Osborne promised that his staff would make an exhaustive search next year for every player who's got even a smidgen of college potential, not only in the state, but in bordering states. This is no back-burner issue. If Nebraska's walkon program withered over a three- or four-year stretch, the entire program would weaken.

Nebraska saying yes to the Kickoff Classic should have surprised no one. Only two schools, Notre Dame and Nebraska, can genuinely be called coast-to-coast recruiting powers. The Irish have the natural appeal to succeed nationally, but Nebraska has no choice. The high school talent available within 500 miles is simply too small a pool. Yes, money was an issue in accepting the bid, but Nebraska has a delicate image as a team that knows no boundaries, and it must look at every opportunity to maintain and enhance that image. The Kickoff Classic will only bring smiles to the faces of NU's recent signees from Massachusetts and New Jersey, even if they don't make the traveling squad. It will be good for East Coast recruiting.

In the same vein, playing UCLA next September in Pasadena on national TV will be a boon. Nebraska strafed the West Coast unmercifully in recruiting this winter and came away with some of the Pacific's most-prized players. Playing and probably beating UCLA on its home turf can only help the program. ■

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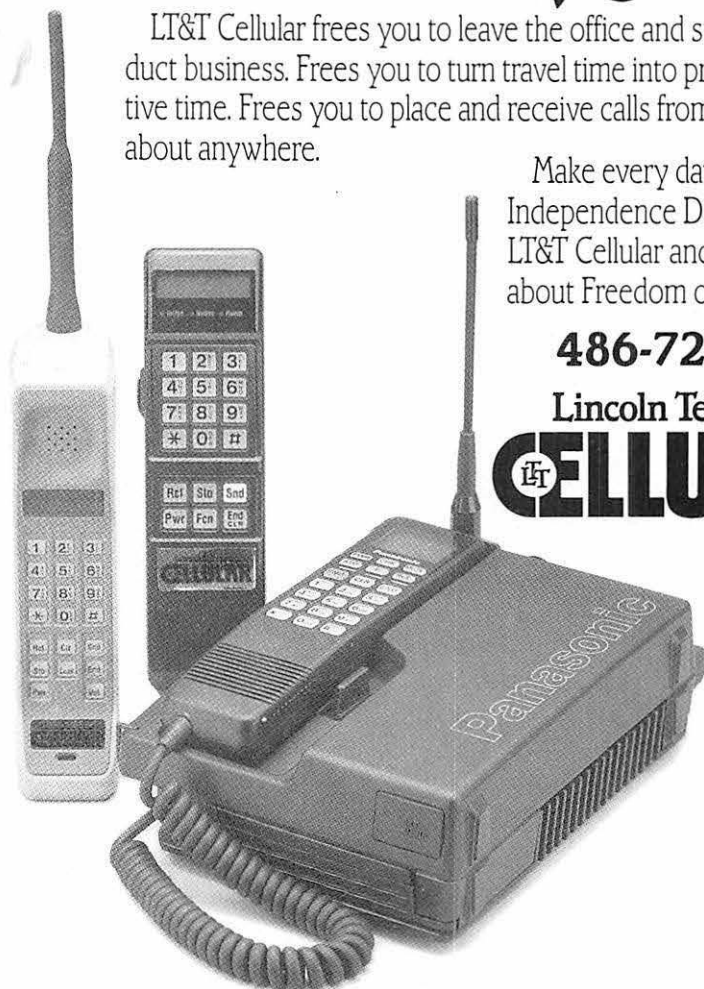
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*continued from page 17*

three state champions and one runnerup in the past five years. We couldn't have survived without Mike." **Gillespie says:** "Another multi-talented athlete. Very competitive. We'll start him out at quarterback, but he's got the talent to play any skill position."

# **TRAVIS HILL**

**School:** Pearland

**City:** Pearland, Tex.

**Position:** DE

**Height:** 6-3

**Weight:** 215

**Speed:** 4.6

**Benchpress:** 225

**Years started:** 4 (4 letters)

**Birthdate:** Oct. 3, 1969

**Parents:** Travis and Gwen Hill

**Hobbies/special interests:** horse riding

**Academic interests:** undecided

**1987 team record:** 0-10

**On the field:** Hill was rated as one of the Top 100 players in Texas by the *Dallas Morning News*. Was rated by *Super Prep* as one of the Top 50 prospects in the Southwest. Played linebacker in high school and made over 100 tackles. As a freshman, he was named District Freshman of the Year while playing for Houston Jefferson Davis. Later transferred to Pearland. Two-time All-District and All-County. He was named All-Greater Houston as a senior.

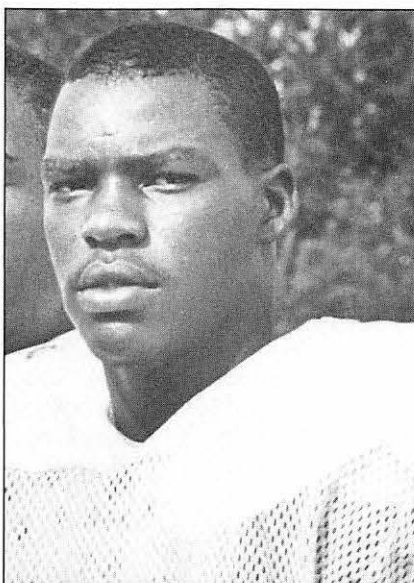
**Other sports:** In basketball, Hill was a second-team All-District center as a junior.

**Why Nebraska?** "It was a really tough decision because Oklahoma was very interested. But Nebraska said they'd give me a shot at defensive end, and that's where I want to play and where I can use my speed. OU said I'd be an inside linebacker."

**Other choices:** Oklahoma

**Coach Rod Ivy says:** "A fine young man and good citizen. Travis is a very intense football player, and frankly, he was the only bright spot for our team. I think he would have gotten a lot more publicity had the team had more success."

**Gillespie says:** "Travis has great speed for his size."



# **TYRONE HUGHES**

**School:** St. Augustine

**City:** New Orleans, La.

**Position:** WB-RB

**Height:** 5-10

**Weight:** 175

**Speed:** 4.4

**Benchpress:** 250

**Years started:** 2 (2 letters)

**Birthdate:** Jan. 14, 1970

**Parents:** Arthur and Anita Hughes

**Academic interests:** corporate management

**1987 team record:** 12-1

**On the field:** Hughes was honored by the *New Orleans Times Picayune* as its Metro Offensive Player of the Year, and he was also named Louisiana Offensive Player of the Year (Class 4A) by the Coaches Association. As a senior, he rushed 86 times for 956 yards and 13 TDs, caught 20 passes for 601 yards (30.1 average) and five scores, returned nine kickoffs for 364 yards (40.4 average) and three TDs, plus he returned 11 punts for 162 yards and four scores. Played sparingly as a junior, so his preseason publicity was limited. By season's end, he was considered one of the top 50 recruits in America. Named as Gatorade's State Player of the Year. St. Augustine was Louisiana's No. 1 rated team until being upset in the playoffs. Team was rated as high as No. 16 nationally. Ten players from his school signed football scholarships.

**Other sports:** Hughes also plays basketball, baseball and runs track. **Why Nebraska?** "The wing set that Nebraska runs is just perfect for me. Plus the players and coaches seemed like really nice people. I went with Mickey Joseph and Reggie Cooper on my visit to Lincoln, and it was a regular Louisiana homecoming. Plus, Oklahoma wanted me to be a halfback, which wouldn't have been my strongest position."

**Other choices:** Oklahoma, LSU

**Coach Burton Burns says:** "Every time Tyrone would touch the ball, everybody in the stands would come to their feet. He was so smooth. We would have a lot of two and three play drives for 80 yards because Tyrone could break a big one anytime."

**Gillespie says:** "Tyrone really fits into our offense well. He's a good kid with a lot of natural ability."

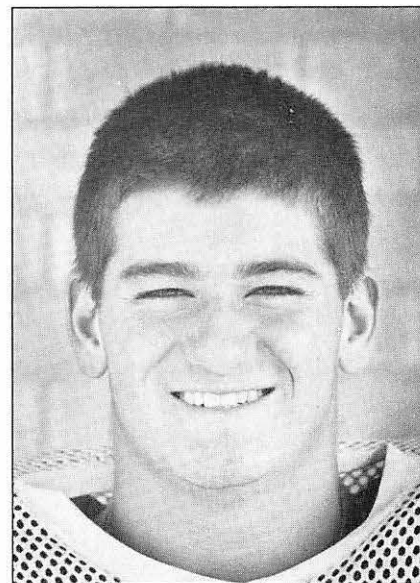


Photo courtesy of Mesa Tribune

# **BART JAMES**

**School:** McClintock

**City:** Tempe, Ariz.

**Position:** DB-QB-K

**Height:** 6-0

**Weight:** 190

**Speed:** 4.5

**Benchpress:** 285

**Years started:** 3 (3 letters)

**Birthdate:** Feb. 8, 1969

**Parent:** Bob James

**Hobbies/special interests:** all sports

**Academic interests:** business

**1987 team record:** 9-3



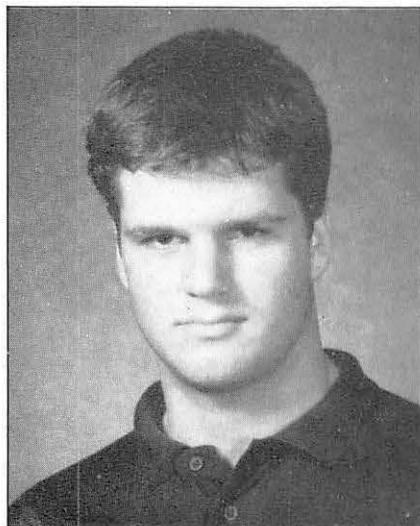
**On the field:** James was honored as an all-state defensive back as a senior, when he was a consensus blue chipper. Rated by *Blue Chip Report* as one of the Top 200 players in the country. He passes for over 1,000 yards and nine TDs and rushed for over 600 yards and seven scores. During his career (he transferred from Missouri last year), James passed for 2,769 yards and 24 TDs. As a free safety, he intercepted eight passes last year and finished with 30 in his career. As a kicker he hit 24-27 extra points, kicked a school-record 43-yard field goal and averaged 40 yards per punt. **Other sports:** In baseball, James is considered one of the top prospects in Arizona.

**Why Nebraska?** "It's just an exciting place to play football — everyone on campus is so supportive and wants to see the team do well."

**Other choices:** Clemson, Florida State, Oklahoma, Alabama

**Coach Carl Keefer says:** "I'm not so sure there wasn't a better pure athlete in Arizona this year. Bart made us a great team in one year's time."

**Gillespie says:** "Bart can play just about any position and play it well. He's also a great leader."



**DAVE JENSEN**  
**School:** Creighton Prep  
**City:** Omaha, Neb.  
**Position:** DT  
**Height:** 6-5  
**Weight:** 265

**Speed:** 4.8

**Benchpress:** 365

**Years started:** 2 (3 letters)

**Birthdate:** Feb. 19, 1970

**Parents:** Jack and Fran Jensen

**Hobbies/special interests:** hunting, fishing

**Academic interest:** business

**1987 team record:** 11-1, three-time state champions

**On the field:** Jensen is easily Nebraska's most decorated recruit. Bally All-American. Second-team *USA Today* All-American and Nebraska Player of the Year. Rated By the *Dallas Morning News* as the No. 19 recruit in America. He was a top-priority on NU's shopping list. As a senior, he registered 62 unassisted tackles (14 for losses) and broke up three passes. Played some tight end.

**Other sports:** In track, Jensen placed fourth in the state as a junior in the discus and should challenge for the state title this year.

**Why Nebraska?** "I was really impressed by the weight room and the coaching staff. All the tools are in place to make me a better football player."

**Other choices:** Notre Dame, Arizona State

**Coach Tom Jaworski says:** "Dave was excellent for us all season, and, yes, I think he was to the point where you could say he's the best lineman we've had here. Dave played well in 1986, and he especially came on strong in the playoffs and showed his potential. He's progressed from there to reach new heights. He's a hard-worker and a good student."

**Gillespie says:** "Just a super athlete with a lot of talent. There's not a lot more that can be said after you've read all the clippings."

#### TYRONE LEGGETTE

**School:** Spring Valley

**City:** Columbia, S.C.

**Position:** DB

**Height:** 5-10

**Weight:** 175

**Speed:** 4.5

**Benchpress:** 265

**Years started:** 2 (2 letters)

**Birthdate:** Feb. 15, 1970

**Parents:** Anne Ruth Leggette and Jesse Shealey

**Hobbies/special interests:** weight lifting, bowling

**Academic interests:** undecided

**1987 team record:** 10-2

**On the field:** Leggette won all-area honors last year as a running back and in 1986 as a cornerback. As a senior, he ran for a school-record 1,580 yards on 210 carries (7.5 average) to lead the state. Ran for a school-record 225 yards in one game and 175 in two others. Had never played running back before. Plans to start Husker career on defense.

**Other sports:** In track, Leggette is considered a strong favorite to win the state 200 meters this spring. He placed third last year (with a 21.6 personal best), and the top two finishers have graduated. Has a 10.5 best in the 100 meters.

**Why Nebraska?** "The facilities were amazing. We probably have the best training facilities at our high school that you'll find in the state, but Nebraska was awesome. Plus, the people I met on my visit were very friendly."

**Other choices:** Wake Forest

**Coach Jerry Brown says:** "What Tyrone did in 1987 was nothing short of amazing when you consider he hadn't been a running back before. He did whatever we asked."

**Gillespie says:** "Tyrone is a very aggressive player. He was a tough running back, but likes the idea of trying cornerback first."

#### LANCE LEWIS

**School:** Scott City

**City:** Scott City, Kan.

**Position:** FB

**Height:** 6-0

**Weight:** 200

**Speed:** 4.6

**Benchpress:** 315

**Years started:** 3 (3 letters)

**Birthdate:** March 27, 1970

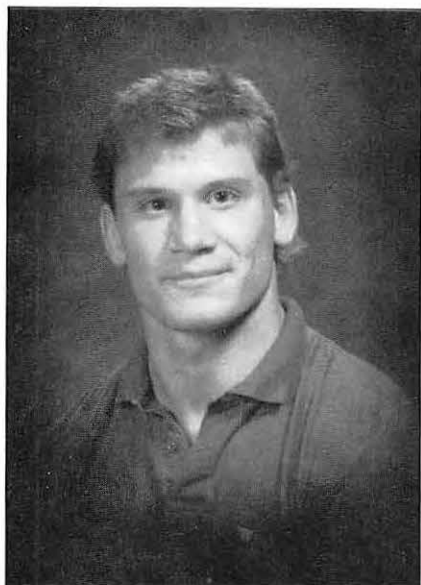
**Parents:** Bob and Zada Lewis

**Hobbies/special interests:** golf, running, weight lifting

**Academic interest:** teaching, coaching

**1987 team record:** 8-3





**On the field:** All-State plus Kansas Player of the Year by *USA Today*. Featured on ESPN's Scholastic Sports America last December. Rushed for over 1,600 yards and 24 TDs as a senior fullback. At linebacker, he led the Northwest Kansas League with 133 total tackles. Also recovered two fumbles and caused six others. Against two-time defending 4-A State Champ Norton High, he rushed for 195 yards and three TDs while forcing two fumbles on defense.

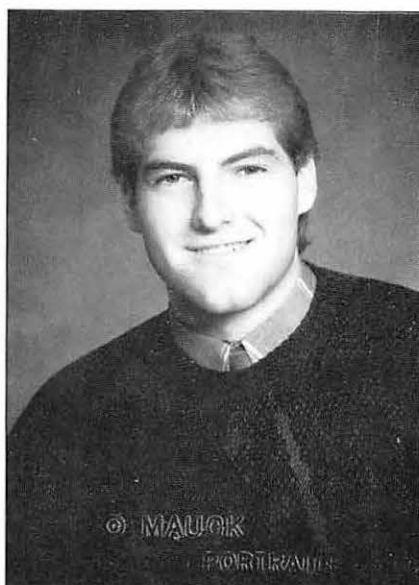
**Other sports:** In track, he is the defending state champ in shot put. Personal best is 59-7. Threw 50 feet as a freshman, 56 as a junior and shooting for 65 as a senior.

**Why Nebraska?** "Some schools wanted to talk football, but Nebraska wanted to talk about character and life. I've read Coach Osborne's book, and everything that comes out of his mouth is in that book. Coach Osborne is just great. After I went to their summer camp, I was sold."

**Other choices:** Arizona State, UCLA, Missouri, both Kansas schools

**Coach Dave Dunham says:** "Lance could beat any kid I've ever coached at any skill test. He's the best all-around athlete I've coached. He's never satisfied. He always gives 100 percent."

**Gillespie says:** "Lance has outstanding football instincts, plus he's a very tough kid. He keeps coming at you."



# JAMIE LIEWER

(Pronounced lee-ver)

**School:** West Holt

**City:** Atkinson, Neb.

**Position:** OL-DL

**Height:** 6-5

**Weight:** 220

**Speed:** 4.7

**Benchpress:** 325

**Years Started:** 4 (4 letters)

**Birthdate:** Dec. 4, 1969

**Parents:** Merle and Anita Liewer

**Academic interest:** undecided

**1987 team record:** 8-1

**On the field:** All-Class. All-State as an offensive lineman, and All-Rangeland Conference on both sides of ball. A rallying point for his teammates, Liewer opened eyes last year against Valentine, making 15 tackles, with more than half coming on plays run away from his side. Also registered four QB sacks, two pass breakups and one fumble recovery. Liewer was the leading Huskie tackler as a junior and senior, finishing with 97 tackles and 13 QB sacks in 1987.

**Other sports:** In basketball, he was considered one of the Top 10 post men among Nebraska high schools, averaging over 10 points and rebounds per game. Started at West Holt as a sophomore. In track, he's thrown the shot over 46 feet and the disc over 152 feet. Liewer has qualified for state in the disc for two years.

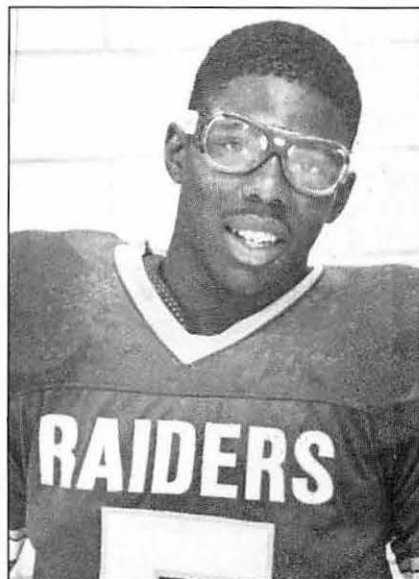
**Why Nebraska?** "I've always wanted

to play there. With the winning tradition and the excellent people, I felt very comfortable with my decision."

**Other choices:** Iowa, Wyoming

**Coach Mike McCabe says:** "Jamie's got more than adequate room to grow. He's very coachable and very dedicated. The kid's just full of life, and he's a lot of fun. I would have loved to have played him at linebacker. Even though he prefers defense, Jamie's intelligent enough to handle a sophisticated offensive system."

**Gillespie says:** "Jamie's a big kid who can really run. He's a solid player with plenty of room to grow. Excellent frame."



# ANDRE McDUFFY

**School:** L.D. Bell

**City:** Hurst, Tex.

**Position:** RB

**Height:** 5-11

**Weight:** 185

**Speed:** 4.5

**Benchpress:** 225

**Years started:** 1 (1 letter)

**Birthdate:** April 26, 1970

**Parents:** John and Henrietta McDuffy

**Hobbies/special interests:** bike riding, horror movies

**Academic interest:** accounting, pre-law

**1987 team record:** 7-2-1

**On the field:** All District. All-Metro, runner-up for league MVP award. Moved from New York to Texas two years ago and had to spend junior year



on JV squad. McDuffy carried 128 times for 816 yards (eight TDs, 6.4 average) and became known for his slashing, tackle-breaking style. Played both fullback and I-back in high school. Also caught seven passes for 161 yards and a 64-yard TD. Was Bell's leading kick returner.

**Other sports:** In track, McDuffy runs on the Bell sprint relay teams.

**Why Nebraska?** "When I talked to the players on my visit, they were very honest, telling me the good and bad. They came across as being like best friends and brothers, and I liked how it isn't fake here. Of course, Nebraska's got a great reputation."

**Other choices:** Arkansas, Oklahoma State, Rice

**Coach Chuck Bohall says:** "Andre's a very smart kid. He's got some outstanding open-field moves. He's also an outstanding blocker, both on the pass and the run. He's a very tough runner, and I can see him having success at either fullback or I-back. He really only went through one spring practice and one full season with us because his mom got transferred here before his junior year, so he ought to improve greatly as he gains more experience."

**Gillespie says:** "Andre's a running back who has the moves to be an I-back and the toughness to be a fullback."

## JUNIOR MONARREZ

(Pronounced ma-NAR-ez)

**School:** Cerritos JC

**City:** Norwalk, Calif.

**Position:** NG

**Height:** 6-2

**Weight:** 270

**Speed:** 4.9

**Benchpress:** 440

**Years started:** 2 (2 letters)

**Birthdate:** March 6, 1962

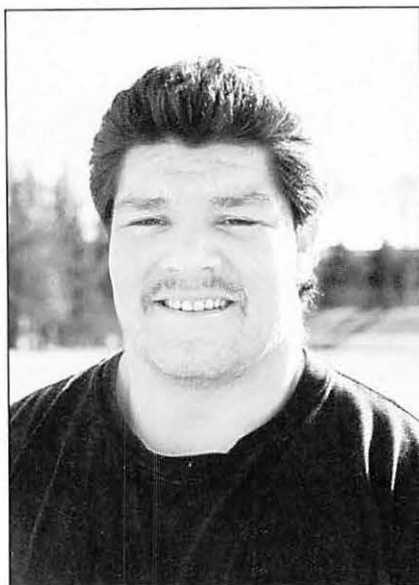
**Parents:** Dionicio and Rose Monarrez

**Hobbies/special interests:** reading, racquetball

**Academic interests:** teaching, coaching, Spanish

**1987 team record:** 6-4-1

**On the field:** Monarrez was a two-time junior college All-American at Cerritos. Last year he had 50 tackles, five QB sacks and five pass breakups.



As a junior he made 78 stops. Graduated from Bell Gardens (Calif.) as an all-state linebacker, then spent three years in the Army. Married. Wife is Mary, plus a son Michael and daughter Michelle.

**Other sports:** none

**Why Nebraska?** "I wanted to get away from California. I wanted to put myself to the test and see what I can really accomplish. Really, it was easy in junior college. Plus, the academic support they give the players is outstanding."

**Other choices:** UCLA

**Coach Frank Mazzotta says:** "He had a dramatic influence on California junior college. He handled every center he faced. He's a program player. He loves the weight room, and he's really aggressive."

**Gillespie says:** "Junior is very, very strong, and we hope he can be competitive at nose guard in spring practice."

## SCOTT PETERSON

**School:** Peoria

**City:** Peoria, Ariz.

**Position:** OL-DL

**Height:** 6-5

**Weight:** 225

**Speed:** 4.7

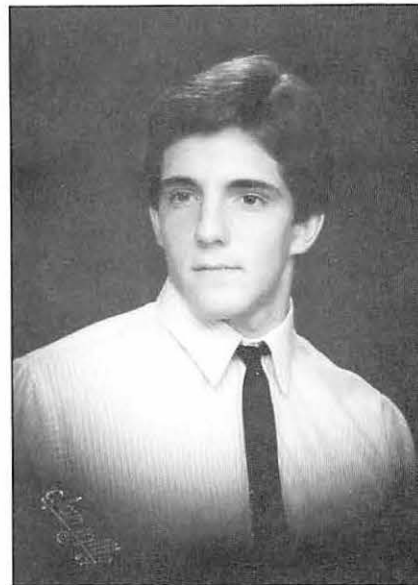
**Benchpress:** 260

**Years started:** 2 (2 letters)

**Birthdate:** May 26, 1969

**Parents:** Ruth Peterson

**Hobbies/special interests:** hunting,



fishing

**Academic interests:** business

**1987 team record:** 12-2

**On the field:** Peterson was first-team All-State and generally considered the best offensive lineman in Arizona. He was a two-year starter for back-to-back state championship teams at Peoria (12-2 as a senior and 9-5 as a junior). PHS offense was geared to run a lot of sweeps, pulls and inside traps where Peterson's blocking was outstanding.

**Other sports:** In track, Peterson throws the shot and discus.

**Why Nebraska?** "I used to live in Palmer, just outside of Grand Island, and we only moved away from Nebraska about six years ago. So, it was like going home."

**Other choices:** Arizona, Arizona State, Wyoming

**Coach Doug Clapp says:** "We have four of our offensive linemen going on to play Division 1 football this year, and I think he could be the best of them."

**Gillespie says:** "For a big man, Scott has outstanding mobility. He can run with skill people."

## MIKE PETKO

**School:** Servite

**City:** Anaheim, Calif.

**Position:** LB

**Height:** 6-3

**Weight:** 230

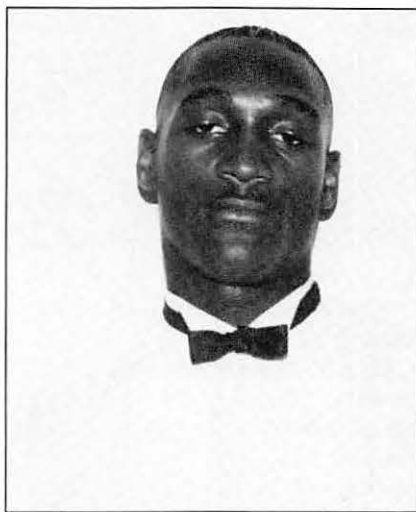
**Speed:** 4.6





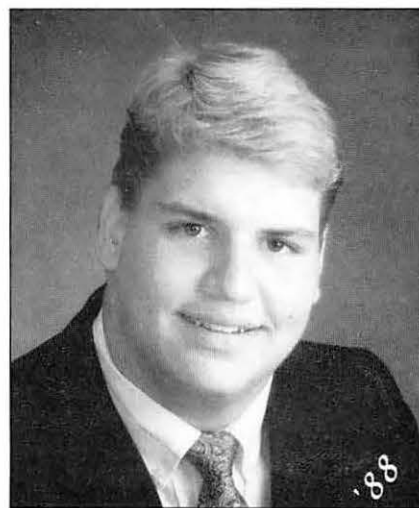
**Benchpress:** 300  
**Years started:** 2 (2 letters)  
**Birthdate:** Oct. 2, 1969  
**Parents:** David and Cathy Petko  
**Hobbies/special interests:** electronics, skiing, racquetball  
**Academic interest:** business management or marketing  
**1987 team record:** 8-3-1  
**On the field:** Petko made several pre-season All-American teams and was generally rated as one of the top 200 players in the country. Made All-League, All-County, All-State. Played inside linebacker as senior and outside linebacker as junior. Against rival LaQuinta, he was great, making four QB sacks, plus several hurries.  
**Other sports:** In baseball, Petko was one of West Coast's top hitters with average over .400 and towering home runs. Local writers tell of 500-foot homer — a line drive. Some say Petko would have been pro draft choice. However, he will not play this spring, instead concentrating on football.  
**Why Nebraska?** "The college-town atmosphere was nice, not at all like Southern California. Plus, you can always count on Nebraska going to a major bowl."  
**Other choices:** Colorado, Michigan  
**Coach Leo Hand says:** "He's very aggressive and has great speed for a linebacker. The one concern is that he hasn't gotten into weights, yet. In a way, though, that's a plus because he's got so much undeveloped potential. He could muscle guys around in high school with his natural strength,

but I think he'll really take off at Nebraska with that weight program." Gillespie says: "Mike has great size for a linebacker, plus he's a great all-around athlete. He's a very tough, aggressive player."



**BRUCE PICKENS**  
**School:** Coffeyville JC  
**City:** Coffeyville, Kan.  
**Position:** DB  
**Height:** 5-11  
**Weight:** 185  
**Speed:** 4.5  
**Benchpress:** 225  
**Years started:** 1 (1 letter)  
**Birthdate:** May 9, 1968  
**Parents:** Clarence and Beatrice Whitley  
**Hobbies/special interests:** drawing  
**Academic interest:** criminal justice with art minor  
**1987 team record:** 9-2  
**On the field:** Pickens was second-team all-conference as a cornerback. He made 48 total tackles (26 unassisted) with 11 pass breakups and five interceptions, which he returned for 129 yards and one TD. Paced CJC's 49-14 win over NU's freshmen with three interceptions and several great hits. Against Butler County, he exploded for 17 tackles (11 solo stops). Could end up as one of Nebraska's fastest players ever. Came from Kansas City (Mo.) high school with poor football program and was redshirted in 1986 because CJC coaches felt he was not ready for that level. Progressed rapidly last fall. Will en-

roll this summer at Nebraska and will have three years of eligibility left.  
**Other sports:** In track, Pickens has all-star speed. He went to the 1987 Junior College National Meet with personal bests of 10.35 in the 100 meters and 20.8 in the 200. Ran a 10.6 in high school which ranked as one of the Top 15 fastest times that year among prepsters. Was also a fine point guard in high school.  
**Why Nebraska?** "It was just the logical next step up for me. It's just a great program and I can get better playing big-time football."  
**Other choices:** Florida, Arizona State  
**Coach Dick Foster says:** "Bruce has the potential to get even better. He's not at Nebraska this spring because, frankly, he didn't expect to progress this quickly. He planned to run track and play another year of football, so he didn't take the summer classes that would have wrapped things up for him. I'd say Bruce has more pure athletic ability than Tim Jackson, but he doesn't have Tim's experience and expertise, yet."  
**Gillespie says:** "Bruce can flat run."



**KEVIN RAMAEKERS**  
**School:** Norfolk Catholic  
**City:** Norfolk, Neb.  
**Position:** OL-DL  
**Height:** 6-4  
**Weight:** 260  
**Speed:** 4.9  
**Benchpress:** 350  
**Years Started:** 3 (4 letters)  
**Birthdate:** Dec. 18, 1969



**Parents:** Bud and Alice Ramaekers  
**Hobbies/special interests:** hunting, fishing, skiing

**Academic interest:** communications and advertising

**1987 team record:** 10-2, runner-up in class C state championship.

**On the field:** made All-State and all-conference for two years. As a senior, Ramaekers made 124 total tackles (30 unassisted and 94 assisted) while earning all-class, all-state honors. He was the second leading tackler on a defensive unit that emphasized linebackers. Good pass rusher. Against Battle Creek, he was a menace, and even knocked down one pass only to grab it himself for the interception. Would switch often from right to left tackle to confuse offenses that tried to run away from his side. On offense, he opened holes for three Knight runners to gain over 500 yards each. NCHS ran to his side 65 percent of the time.

**Other sports:** In track, Ramaekers owns a 60-foot toss in the shot and won Nebraska's prep All-Class gold medal last year. In wrestling, he was 29-1 as a junior to finish third in the state. He's a strong favorite to win the heavyweight title this year and has pinned almost all of his foes. Highly prized by other schools as a track or wrestling specialist.

**Why Nebraska?** "I wasn't stuck on Nebraska at first, but then I went to the Big Red football camp and got to know the players and coaches. Plus, I've got six brothers and sisters in Lincoln."

**Other choices:** Iowa, UCLA, Notre Dame

**Knight coach Jeff Bellar says:** "He's a very hard worker at football, his other sports and even in the off-season. He's really improved his blocking technique this past year. Before, he would just overpower people, and he did a good job of that. He's got the build to put on another 20 pounds."

**Gillespie says:** "Kevin is just a real good athlete. For a person his size he has excellent quickness. Very aggressive. Great strength and coordination."



# **VIC STACHMUS**

(Pronounced STOSH-mus)

**School:** McAlester

**City:** McAlester, Okla.

**Position:** OL-DL

**Height:** 6-5

**Weight:** 240

**Speed:** 4.9

**Benchpress:** 345

**Years started:** 3 (3 letters)

**Birthdate:** Dec. 30, 1969

**Parents:** Mike Stachmus and Marriane Yehley

**Hobbies/special interests:** weight lifting, hunting, fishing

**Academic interests:** business

**1987 team record:** 11-2

**On the field:** Stachmus was named All-Midlands by *Super Prep* as well as All-State, All-Area and All-District. Rated a consensus blue chipper in Oklahoma after coming off a stellar junior season. Started at tight end as a sophomore, both tight end and DT as a junior and DT and OT as a senior. He was also All-District and All-Area as a junior. His team did not keep defensive stats. Stachmus attended the NU football camp last summer.

**Other sports:** In basketball, Stachmus is the starting center for McAlester.

**Why Nebraska?** "It's just a great program, the best I've seen. Academically, they really try to help you get ahead, and the football tradition is just great."

**Other choices:** Oklahoma State, Oklahoma, Iowa

**Coach Allen Wadsworth says:** "Vic is a hard working young man, who should continue to get better as he is exposed to tougher and tougher com-

petition."

**Gillespie says:** "Vic is a fine all-around player with a great deal of potential."

# **WILLIAM WASHINGTON**

**School:** Lee

**City:** Tyler, Tex.

**Position:** TE

**Height:** 6-3

**Weight:** 235

**Speed:** 4.7

**Benchpress:** 275

**Years started:** 2 (2 letters)

**Birthdate:** June 22, 1970

**Parents:** William and JoAnn Washington

**Hobbies/special interests:** basketball

**Academic interest:** pre-med or finance

**1987 team record:** 8-2-1

**On the field:** All-District as both a tight end and defensive end, only player in league to do so. Rated one of the top tight ends in Texas. Caught 18 passes for 425 yards and three TDs. Third-team All-State, All-East Texas. Had four catches for 107 yards against highly rated Lufkin, plus made 17 tackles. Averaged over nine tackles per game as a stand-up end.

**Other sports:** In basketball, Washington was an All-District center as a junior. His team went 26-5 that year, but he hasn't played this season in order to concentrate on football.

**Why Nebraska?** "The people seemed so genuinely friendly and happy. Nebraska has a great winning tradition and academic excellence with all those Academic All-Americans. It's very impressive. It should give me a chance to do what I want with my education."

**Other choices:** Iowa

**Coach Biff Peterson says:** "William's strongest asset is his intelligence. He wants to excel. He's very dedicated. You almost couldn't keep him off the field. He played both sides and loved it. When he got hurt (thigh bruise) in the last three games, it made him sick because he couldn't help the team. I wouldn't be surprised if he contributes as a freshman."

**Gillespie says:** "Good kid with great size and speed for a tight end. Good hands."

*continued on page 36*



# Bad to the Boards

BALANCED BIG EIGHT BASKETBALL HAS RISEN TO NATIONAL GLORY BECAUSE OF ITS PARITY, WHILE TOP-HEAVY FOOTBALL REMAINS A BIG RED ROMP

"We want balance." Thud!  
"We want balance." Bang!  
"We want balance." Boom!

And thusly nagged the national media last fall as they taunted Big Eight football for its lack of parity. Now that basketball is nearing tournament time, the league is dishing out, between hugs and kisses from media experts, enough parity to qualify as a socialist state.

In a matter of months, this is what happened.

Oklahoma beat Pittsburgh.

Iowa State beat Iowa and Purdue.

Kansas beat St. John's and North Carolina State.

Missouri beat UNLV.

And!

Kansas State beat OU.

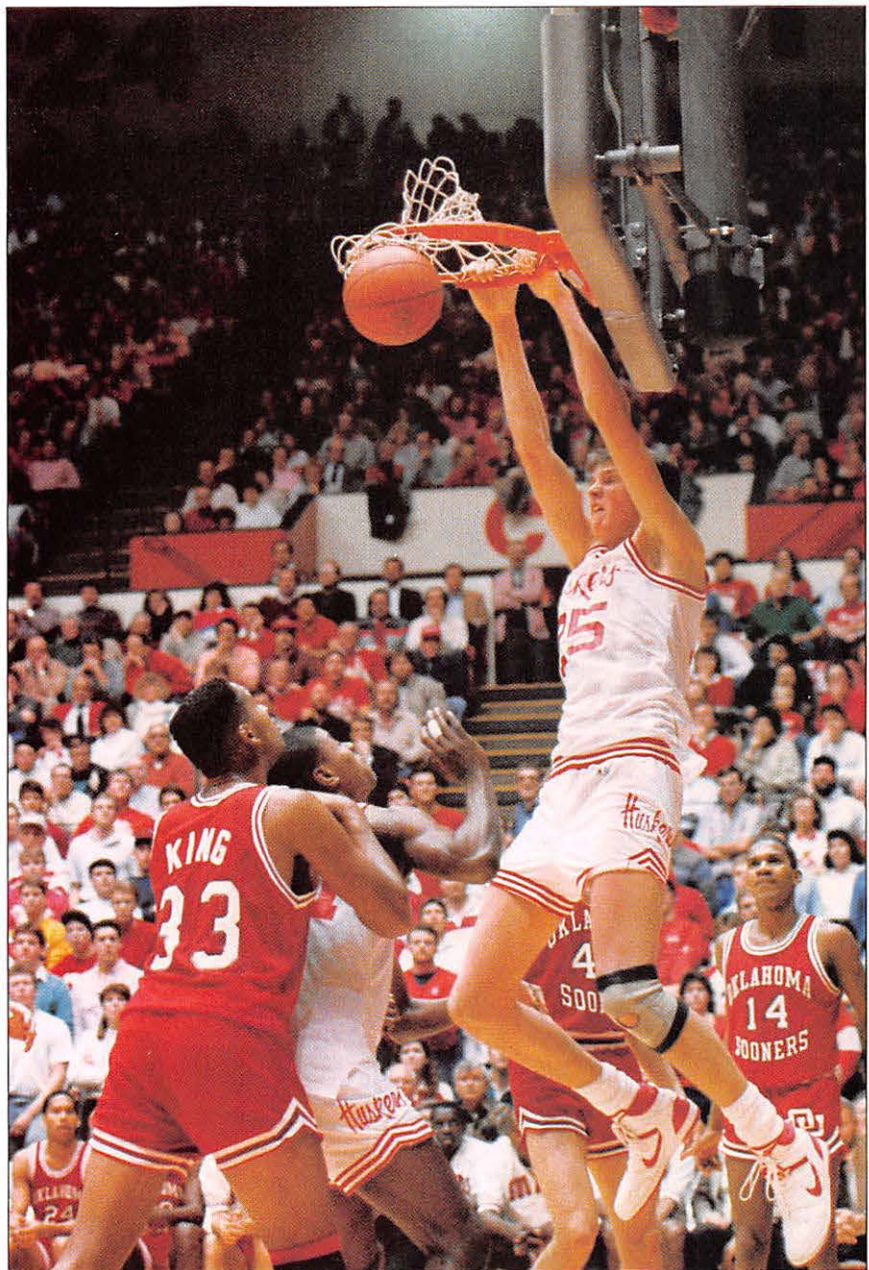
Nebraska beat KU and Mizzou.

Oklahoma State beat ISU.

And Colorado beat OSU.

So far, five conference teams have been at some point ranked in the Top 20. All five (OU, KU, MU, ISU and KSU) will probably play in either the NCAA or National Invitational tournaments. And few people will be surprised if the final four of either tournament features some of those teams. The nastiest new dude on the block now seems to be Big, Bad and Balanced Big Eight Basketball.

Only five or six years have passed since league basketball and football reversed roles as media darlings and media whipping boys. So, some questions remain unanswered. Will basketball, after losing many talented seniors this year, continue to improve? Is this recent success built on a solid foundation? Will Big Eight football





championships *ever* go to a team other than Oklahoma and Nebraska?

To get a clearer view of the Big Eight's basketball future, these questions were posed to some of the top minds in college basketball: Mike Douchant of *The Sporting News*, Bob Castello of *Basketball Weekly*, and Henry P. Iba, the most renowned coach in league history.

They see a bright future.

First, a brief basketball status report is in order to determine just where the league stands.

"There isn't *one* best conference this year — there are seven 'best' leagues, and the Big Eight is one of them," says Douchant, an eight-year veteran at *TSN* where he serves as college basketball editor. "You've got the Big Eight, ACC, Big Ten, Metro, SEC, Big East and the WAC is right up there. You could flip a coin."

Well into his 80s, Iba still remains active in college basketball. Not only did he win two national championships at Stillwater, he also coached the

Olympics and shaped the amateur game through his disciples, such as Indiana's Bobby Knight and Kentucky's Eddie Sutton. Whenever the NCAA or college coaches gather to discuss the state of their sport, Iba's opinion is always a force.

"For a while it was the Big Ten," he says. "Then it was the Southwest, then the Southeastern and now the Big East. I think the Big Eight has as strong a program as anybody right now."

Sure, Iba could be expected to be prejudiced because he still lives in Stillwater, and darned if the Cowboys didn't rename their remodeled arena after him. His expertise and eye for good basketball, however, cannot be challenged.

But Douchant has no bias for the Big Eight ("To be honest, I was one of the Big Eight's biggest critics in the late '70s and early '80s."), and neither does *Basketball Weekly* assistant editor Castello.

"I put a lot of stock personally in

depth," he says. "And if you look at the second division of the Big Eight, you'll find teams that can compete with the upper division teams, and on a given night, those lower divisions teams could probably play with a lot of teams in the country. Colorado is the only one that's really separated.

Then what we're dealing with here is pretty much the Big Seven and Colorado, right?"

"Sure," says Castello. "And you're a really solid conference when you can say that on any given night, you can go to a conference opponent's place and lose on the road. The Big Ten could say that a few years ago.

"I think any team in the Big Eight can go on the road anywhere in the league and lose on a given night."

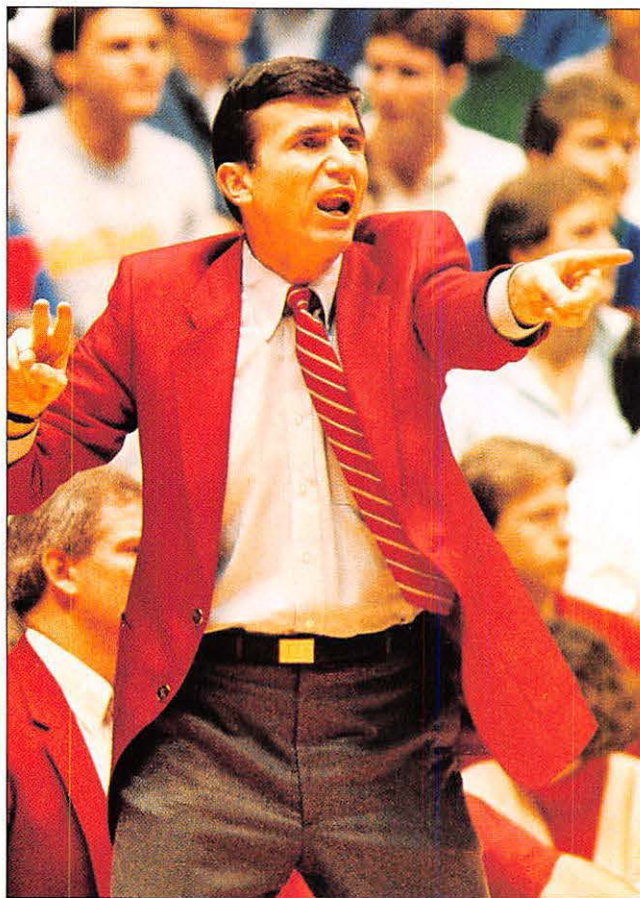
That's no big deal, though. During the 1978-79 season, Big Eight teams regularly lost on the road, as well as at home, at the office, at the lake, in the shower, you name it. Its ineptitude knew no boundaries. Every conference team lost at least 10 games that year, and Oklahoma had to win its NCAA first-round game to reach the 20-win mark. OU's 10-4 record took the league crown, and three teams stood at 8-6 in second place. Nobody even came close to winning 20 games except the Sooners, who were the league's solitary guest in the NCAA tourney.

That's parity, all right, parity of mediocrity.

But, the difference in 1988 is that the league is consistently good, as noted by the above-mentioned prestigious scalps. Coach Billy Tubbs, without question, has the Sooners groomed as the league's star team and a dominant one at that. But it's not because they've beaten dogs. The league's tough, and has been tough for three years.

The crossroads, though, could come next season, after the Big Eight relinquishes its seniors, and it's hard to think of a league that has a better class. Will there be life after Grant-Manning-Richmond-Chievous-Grayer?

"I think they'll be all right because they'll still have that link to the jucos," says Douchant.



**Danny Nee and other Big Eight coaches can point with pride to the basketball league's top-to-bottom success.**



Junior college players recently have become status symbols, especially after Knight landed point guard Keith Smart, who won the 1987 National Championship for Indiana with a last-second jumper. Giving credit where credit is due, the Big Eight began raiding jucos even before Knight, and should continue doing so long after he stops, which may be soon.

"The best junior college basketball in the country is played in the Jayhawk Conference, I don't think anyone will question that," says Husker Coach Danny Nee. "And the Jayhawk Conference is right in the middle of Big Eight country. You've got Kansas and Kansas State right there, and all the other schools are on the borders. We all go there for players, and we'll probably continue to go there."

Last year, for example, nine of the nation's Top 30 juco players signed with Big Eight teams. The conference with the second-most juco recruits was the Southwest with three, but only because Houston signed them all.

This spring, seven of the projected best 30 juco sophomores in America are playing in the Jayhawk Conference. The pool of talent remains deep.

"The Big Eight's got those juco relationships in place now," says Douchant. "They'll have that pipeline to the jucos forever. And because of Prop 48, all the high-profile teams (that only recruit high school players) are hurting. Their star freshmen can't play, they lose a year of eligibility and, even when they come back, the kids are rusty. You've got about half of the Top 50 high school kids from the past two years collecting rust."

"With jucos, you've got live bodies that can help you right away."

But there's a dark lining to that silver cloud of live bodies. You see, media experts and coaches aren't the only ones who expect jucos to help right away. The jucos do, too. The wants and needs of 20-year-old juniors are dramatically different from teen-aged freshmen. The Sooners, for example, this season brought in five jucos, all of whom averaged over 20 points per game before transferring. People like Mookie Blaylock, Mike

Bell, Tyrone Jones, Art Pollard and Andre Wiley arrived on campus with tons of experience and fabulous reputations to uphold. Behold, the juco ego.

But as OU has risen to college basketball elitism this year, Blaylock (averaging 17 points a game) is the only starter of that group. It's fair to expect jucos to be especially sensitive about playing time because they've not only enjoyed successful high school careers, but they've also been hotshots in the junior college ranks. There's no intimidation factor. It doesn't seem out of the ordinary to imagine a worst-case scenario where talented transfers could become discouraged with limited playing time and sulk or, more drastically, quit the team.

However, Oklahoma has the perfect ointment for a bruised ego — winning. It's kept the Sooners harmonious even with four juco studs sitting on the bench.

Douchant isn't so sure OU's juco

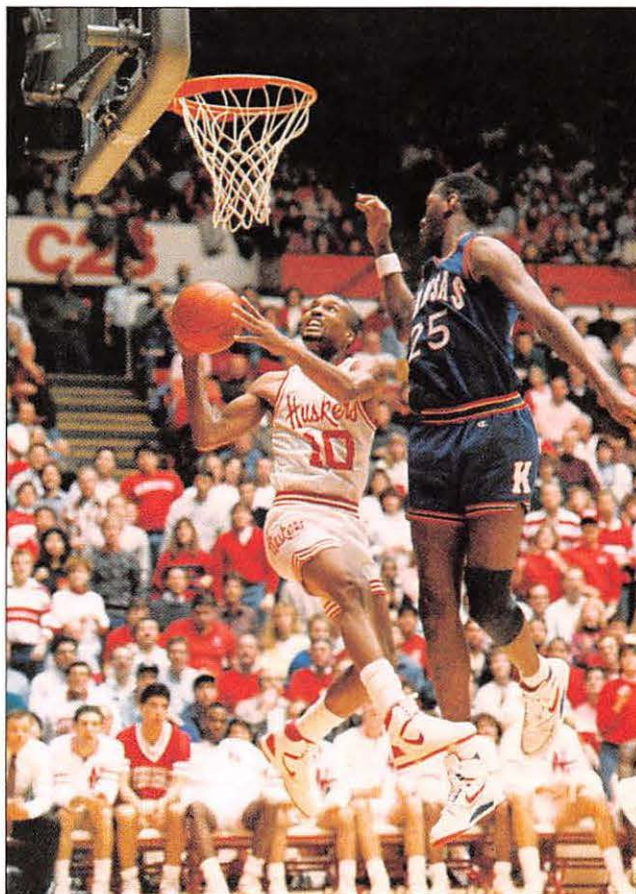
gorging is a concern at all.

"Who's to say they're not laying the ground work for another great season after Ricky Grace, Harvey Grant and Dave Sieger are gone," he says. "They might not slack off a bit precisely because the jucos that Tubbs got last year are quality players. They're just not getting the minutes now to generate gowdy stats."

"Billy Tubbs," says Castello, "is starting to stockpile talent a lot like Switzer has done in football."

But too much of a good thing can be bad. Just ask the Big Ten about its juco experience which has turned sour. Big Ten basketball coaches are howling now because of a new conference rule which forces junior college transfers to sit out a year before seeing varsity action, and it's all in the name of academics. The league reviewed the graduation rate of its recent juco players and was alarmed at its poor showing. The wait, they contend, will help the jucos adapt academically. Big Ten representatives

**When Nebraska beat Kansas (here) and Missouri, it may have turned All-American Danny Manning's head, but media experts weren't surprised.**





# Vitale Loves NU's 24-Karat Conference

With impressive wins over Kansas and Missouri, the Cornhuskers have proven they can compete in the powerful Big Eight even though it may be a couple of years before Nebraska's fighting for the title. Dick Vitale, America's foremost college basketball expert, takes a look at Husker basketball, Danny Nee, the NCAA tournament and the Big Eight's future.

"Everyone in the college basketball family knows about Danny Nee — that he's a workaholic, the tremendous enthusiasm he possesses, a New York guy with a lot of contacts.

"But the bottom line for Nee and Nebraska and any successful program, whether it's basketball or football, is you've gotta have players. You've got to go out and get some talent — some Rolls Royce performers to beat people. You just can't beat people with X's and O's and coaching.

"I think Danny's workaholic attributes, the great facility they have and the enthusiasm for the conference, which has become a true solid gold basketball conference, will lead to better players and better players will get him those ultimate W's.

"It's so wide open this year, it's like Russian Roulette every time one of the top teams goes out there. The parity's so unbelievably rampant throughout the nation. Oklahoma would certainly have to be in there as one of the national championship favorites. I think you've also got to consider Temple, North Carolina, Duke, Michigan and Purdue of the Big Ten, Syracuse and Pittsburgh of the Big East, Arizona and Missouri maybe of the Big Eight. I really think eventually Missouri could get rolling and cause some problems. I think Chievous can carry them.

"Yes, the Big Eight has had a lot of success here recently with juco players, but I think you also have to have a JC and high



**Dick Vitale remains unchallenged as the most well-traveled and well-known broadcaster in college basketball.**

school balance. Personally, if I were running a program, I would go for a majority of high school kids who've got four years of eligibility and develop more stability for your program, and then fill in the need factor out of the juco ranks. I think that if you go heavily to the juco ranks, you can't get to the top of the mountain.

"In many cases, a lot of the juco kids don't have the on-court discipline for success. It's all right to blend in one or two, but you go with a whole squad and it's very difficult to consistently win. There are exceptions to every rule, and you can win and win big with JC players. It's been proven by several schools, including Oklahoma and Kansas and Kansas State.

"Now I do think having so many jucos makes it harder to get the top high school players. The guys, the other recruiters, will pound that at the high schoolers, and recruiting can be a

vicious cycle. I'm sure that other teams, whenever they're recruiting that blue chip thoroughbred, are going to say, 'Hey, you go to one of those Big Eight schools and they're going to bypass you and bring in a juco kid who's got two years of eligibility to your four.' But the Big Eight has come on strong and is getting a lot of TV exposure, so that if a kid sincerely believes in himself, he's not going to worry. The great player — he's a legit Top 10 player like a Rex Chapman coming out of high school — isn't going to care if you're going juco, high school or wherever.

"What the Big Ten did was pass a rule that says a juco who was Prop 48 out of high school cannot play his first year at a university, but he can practice and he can have a scholarship. Personally, I think it's a big no-no. These kids have demonstrated some maturity, gone to junior college and graduated. Why should they be penalized severely and not be able to play immediately? I think the Big Ten will hurt itself very keenly in its recruiting wars, and they might need those two or three juco players. That's only going to make the Big Eight more attractive to those kids.

"The big test for the Big Eight is going to come next year. That's the one big asset for the Big East, Big Ten and SEC — they do it year in and year out. In fact, their new recruits coming in — the Big East signed 20 percent of the Top 50 kids in the country. They got 10 of 'em coming into the conference. Then the Big Ten and ACC have a good balance of the others; 1989 will be the proof. What is the Big Eight going to do to replace the Grants and Mannings and Richmonds and players of that magnitude? That's the test. The Big Eight was definitely a quality league this year. It will be interesting to see how they do next year." ■



went so far as to sniff around for support for a similar national rule at this January's NCAA convention. Most schools thought the idea stunk, and the issue was never officially voted upon.

But if the Big Eight is to continue its basketball success it must maintain its juco success, and that means policing transfers so that grades and graduation rates don't fall so low that it becomes embarrassing. With its one-year-sabbatical rule, the Big Ten will be hard pressed to sign any junior college player of consequence.

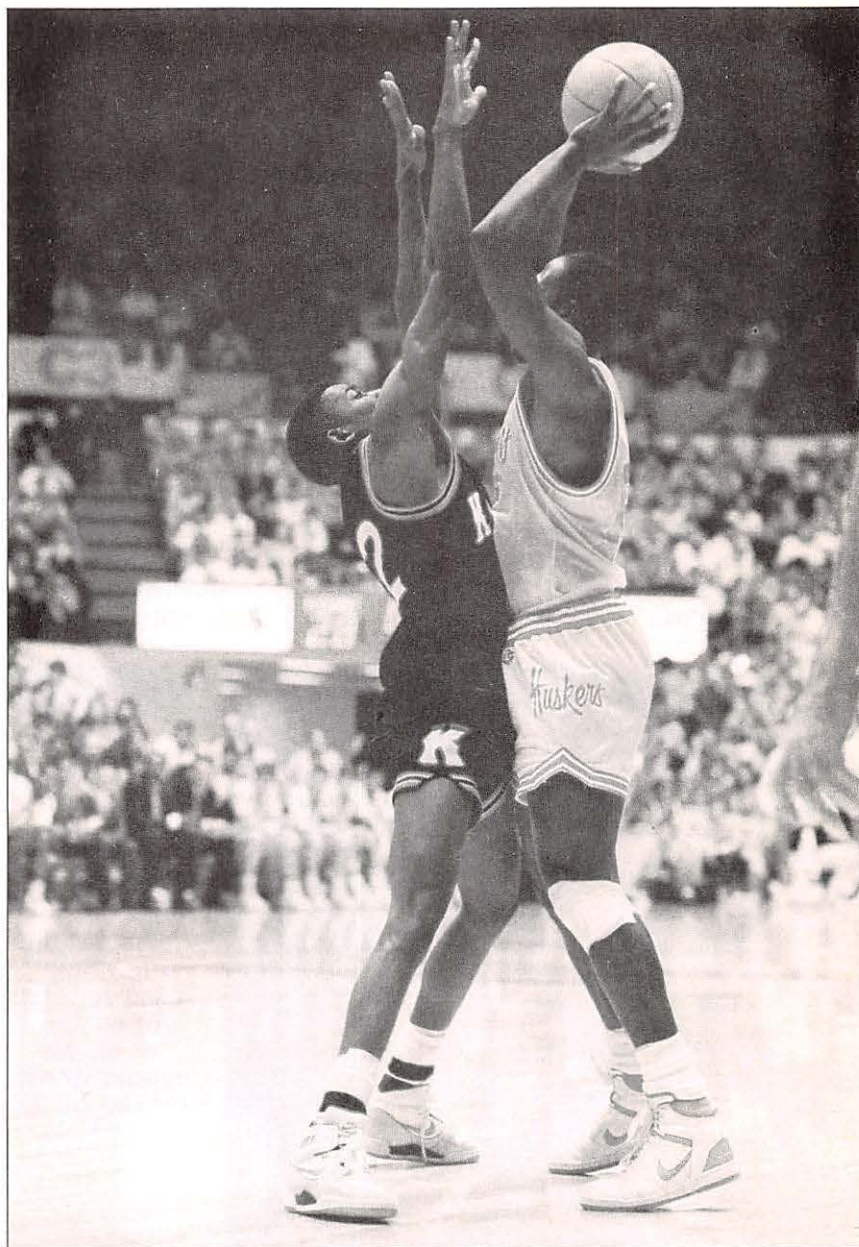
"But there can be drawbacks to going after jucos if you lean on that system too much," Castello says of the Big Eight's future. "Mainly, it's because there's just too much high school talent out there. You've got to go hog wild in both directions."

Douchant agrees that the key to Big Eight basketball staying at its current level and possibly even challenging the traditional conference powers will be whether its teams can crack the Top 25 prep list, which is usually gobbled up by the likes of Kentucky, North Carolina, Louisville and Indiana.

"If the Big Eight teams can just get two or three of the Top 25 high school kids in the country, similar to what Missouri did with Doug Smith last year, they'll be right up there with the best of them."

High school recruiting in 1988 could be critical. Certainly, the league landed some great talent last year, but only Smith (the No. 6 player in the country, according to *All-Star Report*) and Oklahoma State's Richard Dumas (No. 28) are playing. OU originally signed studs like Lance Kroll, Kermit Holmes and Daman Patterson, while Kansas got Antoine Lewis and OSU signed Thomas Jordan, but each of them sunk into a Prop 48 quagmire. For the Big Eight to continue its up cycle, its top prospects must score in the classroom, too, or else the recruiting resources of dollars and time may be wasted on a player who enrolls somewhere else, like Kentucky's Prop 48 John Pittman did by landing at OSU.

Another key to the league's future



**It may be physically impossible for Big Eight basketball competition (above) to get any closer. Former Cowboy coach Henry P. Iba (right) says Nebraska-Oklahoma dominance in football will change.**

will be the size of those all-star recruits. It wasn't that long ago that Big Eight basketball recruiters signed All-American high schoolers and later turned them into All-American college players. It's just that they tended to all be guards.





"In the late 1970s we became a guard's league," says Bill Hancock, assistant commissioner of the Big Eight and its main publicist during that era. "Our great players were guards, and after a while we stopped having success in the NCAA tournament. I think the turn-around may have started when Missouri got Steve Stipanovich."

"Po" shook the league as a 7-foot freshman when he was named New-comer of the Year in 1980. By 1983, he was a consensus All-American and rival coaches scrambled to retaliate with their own giants. Tubbs got Wayman Tisdale and Moe

Iba landed 6-11 Dave Hoppen. And the trend has continued with KU's Manning, OU's Grant and Stacey King and even Iowa State's Lafester Rhodes. The 1979 All-Big Eight team, for example, consisted of four guards and a forward while the 1987 version featured four forwards and one guard. The 1985 all-conference team had two centers, three forwards and *no* guards. Remember what happened in 1979? The Big Eight had only one team, OU, in the NCAA tourney. In the last three seasons, with talented big men taking control, the league has had a total of 12 entrants in the

tourney.

And some of the most promising players in the Big Bad Big Eight next year will probably be front-line players: King, Dumas, Smith and even Nebraska's 7-foot Rich King.

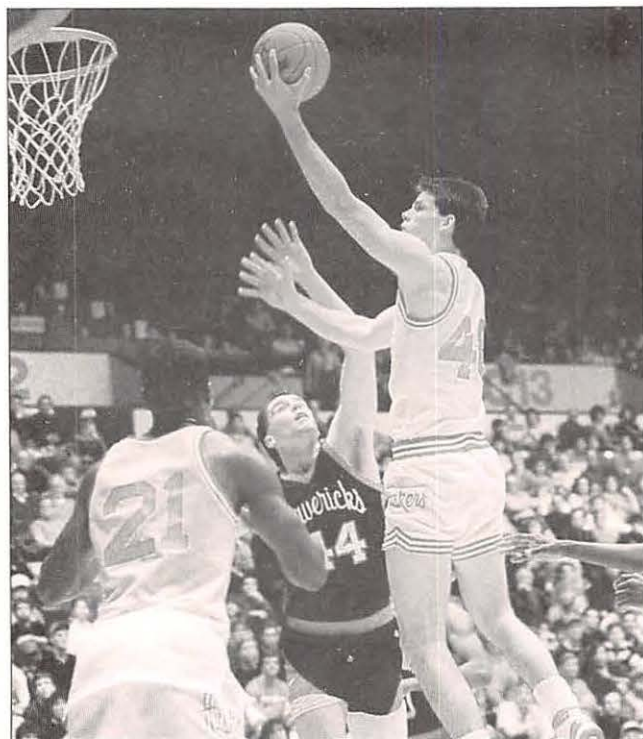
These players will all be returning, but will their coaches? Much of the league's success must lay squarely with its coaches, both the new ones and veterans. Tubbs has regularly been dodging rumors all winter that Texas would love him to prod the Longhorns. Johnny Orr at Iowa State has turned Iowa State into a contender, yet his relationship with players has matured to the point where it's not so much a father-son bond as it is a grandfather-son bond. To be conservative, Orr probably qualifies for senior citizen discounts at most pharmacies, so it's not outlandish to imagine that in a few years the P.A. announcer in Ames may change his pre-game battle cry to "W-w-where's Johnny?"

The Big Eight truly has some attractive coaches, the kind that other "power" schools may eyeball when they have job vacancies. The league's predicament will be to hold on to them. Leonard Hamilton and Nee are examples of men who are right in the middle of promising starts.

"If I made a list of the Top 10 coaches who are ready for prime time, to really come onto the national scene as hot properties, Danny Nee would be on that list," says Castello. "The key for Danny is going to be whether he can recruit the great players to Nebraska. Everybody who knows what he did at Ohio knows he can coach. The key for Leonard is going to be whether he can coach. He can recruit, no doubt about it. But in the Big Eight, he's going up against guys on the bench who know what they're doing."

Not to kick a dead horse, but doesn't it seem like Larry Brown at KU is *always* rumored to be in line for a job?

If the Big Eight can hold on to its prized coaches and allow them to turn their programs into "power" programs that can maintain this year's excitement, then the future, indeed,



**While Beau Reid (40) and Big Eight basketball (left) soared...**

**...Big Eight football (below) got its pride hurt when the media said it lacked parity.**





looks bright for basketball.

Those are a lot of variables, but nothing insurmountable. Which is not the case with football.

"I'd just be hard pressed to find any indicators that Oklahoma and Nebraska are headed for hard times," says *Sports Illustrated* senior writer Douglas L. Looney, chief Big Eight basher this past football season. "If what a conference is all about is competition, then the Big Eight doesn't have it. Big Eight basketball has become infinitely better, and I'm just now getting over the idea that there are only two teams in the Big Eight — Kansas and Kansas State. I'll definitely go along with the idea of the Big Seven and Colorado when it comes to basketball, although I do think even that's being charitable to Colorado. But even Colorado won some games in basketball. In football, people like Kansas, Kansas State and

Iowa State have *no* chance."

Iba disagrees.

"With Oklahoma and Nebraska at the top, that won't hold forever," he insists. "I'm glad they're up there, don't misunderstand me, but the conference is dedicated to overall excellence throughout its athletic programs, and other teams will move up."

"Iba is correct," Looney says. "But it's not going to change in his lifetime. It's not going to change in 300 years. When there's a new civilization on this planet, it might change."

Looney, like a lot of other parity advocates, sees that basketball is a volatile sport, where programs can rise or fall with the arrival or departure of two or three star players. Dramatic changes can happen quickly.

"When Nebraska beat Kansas and Missouri in basketball, that didn't surprise me," says Looney. "When Kan-

sas State beat OU — and Oklahoma's got a great team — that didn't faze me either. But I still hear people talking about how Colorado beat Nebraska two years ago in football. You know why? Because it never happens.

"For Kansas State to be competitive with Oklahoma in football would take a miracle, and miracles don't come to Manhattan, or Lawrence for that matter. It's a numbers game, and big numbers at that, because you've got to sign a dozen or more outstanding players before you can even start to think about improving a sick football program.

"What can you do about Big Eight football not being competitive at the top? It's like the Middle East — it can't be solved."

Big, Bad and Balanced Big Eight Basketball may not ever have that problem again, at least not in Looney's lifetime. ■

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### ***Travel with Confidence.***

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continued from page 28

# DAVID WHITE

School: St. Augustine

City: New Orleans, La.

Position: DE-LB

Height: 6-3

Weight: 225

Speed: 4.7

Benchpress: 335

Years started: 3 (3 letters)

Birthdate: Feb. 27, 1970

Parents: Leroy and Sheila White

Hobbies/special interests: dancing, swimming, cars, student government.

Academic interests: pre-med

1987 team record: 12-1

**On the field:** White was an All-District and All-Metro tight end in 1987, while also making Academic All-State. He caught 15 passes for 225 yards for high-powered Augustine, which averaged over 40 points per game. As a sophomore he made All-District as a defensive end before switching to offense.

**Other sports:** In track, David throws the javelin and discus.

**Why Nebraska?** the coaches were very honest, and I was really impressed with the academics.

**Other choices:** Notre Dame, Oklahoma, LSU

**Coach Burton Burns says:** "David would have been a superstar for a team that threw the ball more. He was probably our best college prospect until Tyrone Hughes ran wild this season. My goodness, David is a fine young man — honors classes and such a hard worker."

**Gillespie says:** "David's one of the finest prospects out of New Orleans. Even though he played tight end last year, he really wants to play defense."

# CHRIS YBARRA

School: Fontana

City: Fontana, Calif.

Position: OL

Height: 6-4

Weight: 240

Speed: 4.8

Benchpress: 305

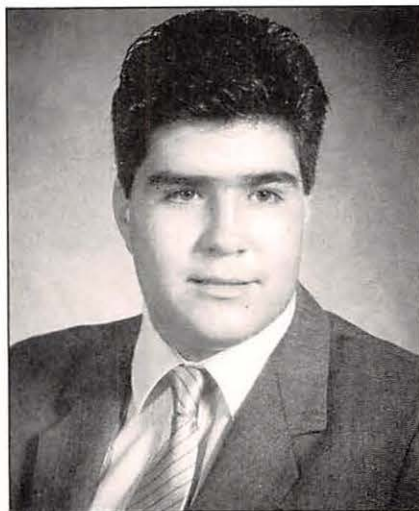
Years started: 2 (3 letters)

Birthdate: Dec. 19, 1970

Parents: Richard and Roberta Ybarra

Hobbies/special interests: bowling, swimming, racquetball

Academic interest: child psychology



**1987 team record:** 14-0, state champions

**On the field:** Ybarra was All-State and All-League. Was especially effective on option and trap blocking. Fontana boasts of perhaps the best West Coast football program, and team was rated No. 3 in the nation by *USA Today*. School sent offensive linemen Nigel Clay and Steve Lee to Oklahoma two

years ago. Ybarra's best game came against Fountain Valley for the state title as Fontana rolled impressively, 21-0. He helped open holes for a pair of FHS runners who gained over 2,000 and 1,000 yards, respectively, on a team that ran 70 percent of the time.

**Other sports:** baseball

**Why Nebraska?** "It's simply the greatest university around. The school, the academics, the athletics. The players and coaches made me feel so comfortable here. Plus, the fan support is great — a lot like our high school situation. Football is a big deal here, and it has a bigger place in people's minds in Nebraska, too."

**Other choices:** Washington, Arizona State

**HI coach says:** "He can pull, he can pass block, he can do it all. He's a good player, and he just did what we asked him to do."

**Gillespie says:** "Chris is a lineman who can really run. He's got real good quickness and downfield blocking. He could play almost any position in the offensive line." ■

## 1988 Husker Recruits

Name	School	Pos.	Ht.	Wt.	Spd.
Scott Baldwin	Roselle, N.J.	RB	6-2	190	4.4
Ernie Beler	Bayonne, N.J.	B	5-10	190	4.5
Jon Bostick	Bellevue (Wash.) Interlake	SE	6-2	185	4.5
Steve Carmer	Wahoo	DB	6-1	190	4.6
Tyrone Byrd	Chandler, Ariz.	DB	6-0	175	4.5
Jeremiah Clark	Mesa, Ariz.	DT	6-4	230	4.7
Jason Daniel	Midland (Tx.) Lee	OL	6-3	230	4.7
Darin D. Duin	Fargo (N.D.) South	DB	6-2	190	4.4
Mike Grant	Brandon, Fla.	QB	6-2	205	4.6
Travis Hill	Pearland, Tx.	DE	6-3	215	4.6
Tyrone Hughes	New Orleans St. Augustine	WB	5-10	175	4.4
Bart James	Tempe (Ariz.) McClintock	B-K	6-0	190	4.5
Dave Jensen	Omaha Creighton Prep	DT	6-5	265	4.8
Tyrone Leggette	Columbia (S.C.) Spring Valley	DB	5-10	175	4.5
Lance Lewis	Scott City, Kan.	FB	6-0	200	4.6
Jamie Liewer	Atkinson (Neb.) West Holt	L	6-5	220	4.7
Andre McDuffy	Hurst (Tx.) Bell	IB-FB	5-11	185	4.5
Junior Monarrez	Cerritos (Calif.) Jr. College	NG	6-2	270	4.9
Scott Peterson	Peoria, Ariz.	L	6-5	225	4.7
Mike Petko	Anaheim, Calif.	LB	6-3	230	4.6
Bruce Pickens	Coffeyville (Kans.) Jr. College	DB	5-11	185	4.5
Kevin Ramaekers	Norfolk (Neb.) Catholic	L	6-4	260	4.9
Vic Stachmus	McAlester (Ok.)	L	6-5	240	4.9
William Washington	Tyler (Tx.) Lee	TE	6-3	235	4.7
David White	New Orleans St. Augustine	DE	6-3	225	4.7
Chris Ybarra	Fontana, Calif.	OL	6-4	240	4.8

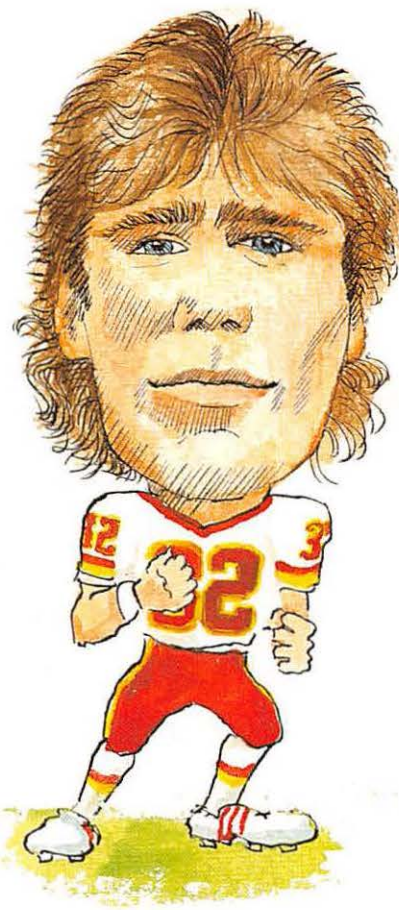


# Football A.T. (After Tom)

SOME HUSKERS ARE STILL FOOTBALL STARS  
EVEN AFTER LEAVING NEBRASKA

Now *this* is a sweepstakes. Just imagine opening your mailbox to find an entry form with Tom Osborne's smiling face on it. Then you shuffle through the junk mail to find another sweepstakes envelope with goofball-looking Ed McMahon showing his capped teeth. What do you do? Pitch old Ed in the trash, and for good reason. Oh sure, Ed and Publishers Clearing Throat can fix you up with \$10,000,000, but the chances of cashing in with that elusive winning sweepstakes number are about 10 zillion-to-one. In the Osborne envelope, though, you'll find simply a letter-of-intent to play football for Nebraska. The jackpot in this case is a National Football League career, and the Huskers have proven year after year that the odds of landing one of those prestigious hundred-grand-a-year jobs in the NFL may be as favorable as 10-to-1.

That's the flip side of high school recruiting. Only five or six years A.T. (After Tom), a good percentage of this year's recruits will almost certainly be playing for pay. Just in the 1980s, for example, Nebraska has had an average of six players taken in the pro draft, and about half make it. One definition of "make it" would be to play three or four years or more and



Rookie Brian Davis enjoyed a playoff payoff.

pull down six figures a year. That's fairly typical.

Some simple math shows that a typical recruiting class of 25 players ought to produce about three or four NFL mainstays. Some may be stars, others backups. And just who might the lucky entrants be this year? No telling. It could be anyone from a Dave Jensen to a Scott Baldwin-type or a Jon Bostick. The winners definitely won't be shown during the six-o'clock NBC "Nightly News" any time soon. It will take years.

And, unfortunately, many of Nebraska's recent NFL sweepstakes winners haven't even gotten much exposure on the six-o'clock ESPN "Sports Center." Now, it's equal-access time. Volumes have been written about the recruiting class of 1988 and what these players did in the past couple of years B.T. (Before Tom), so let's find out how some of their predecessors have done since they played for Big Red.

The class of 1985 had a super year. Brian Davis signed with NU as a junior college transfer that spring, and he was drafted by the Washington Redskins upon graduation just last year. In case you didn't notice, Washington won the Super Bowl, and Davis made several playoff intercep-



tions and often showed his golden locks on national TV. Not bad for a 1987 second-round draft pick. What did those Super Bowl winners get? Was it \$70,000? Something like that. Brian...old buddy...old pal, now *that* is hitting the jackpot.

1983 produced a pretty good recruiting class, too. Danny Noonan and Marc Munford came out of that group. What ever happened to old Noon? After being drafted No. 8 in the first round last spring, he finally signed with Dallas on Aug. 30 and was activated for the Cowboys' third regular season game. He began the season at defensive end but moved to tackle after the strike. He spelled All-Pro Danny White quite a bit, and Noonan finished his rookie season with 27 total tackles. There's speculation out of the Cowboy organization that Noonan has a good shot at replacing White next year. Either that, or

move back to end for more playing time.

Speaking of Dallas, its roster now lists one less Cornhusker. John Dutton, who was an All-American tackle for Bob Devaney in 1973, was released by the Cowboys after 14 years in the pros. He was a starter when the season began, but got hurt on his very first play from scrimmage and played only four total games before he was released 10 weeks into the schedule.

Munford was drafted in the sixth round last spring by Denver and a curious observer in the Super Bowl this year. But this former NU linebacker wasn't on the field with Davis because of a back injury, which required surgery shortly thereafter.

Nebraska was well represented on some very successful teams.

For example, the Houston Oilers featured four Huskers on their roster. Chief among those, of course, was All-

Pro running back Mike Rozier, who had his best NFL season by rushing for 957 yards on 227 carries (4.2 average). After a long playoff drought, the Oilers beat Seattle in the American Football Conference wildcard match-up, and Rozier was a major part of that win. He ran for 91 yards and one TD on 30 carries. Nebraska's 1983 Heisman Trophy winner definitely hit the jackpot.

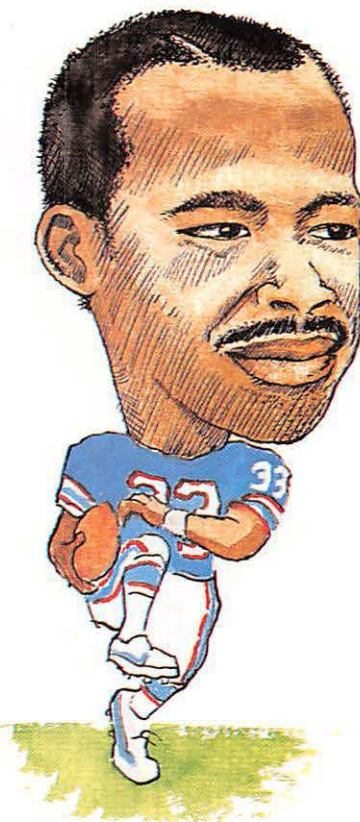
Ever wonder what happened to 1983 Outland and Lombardi winner Dean Steinkuhler? He's also starting for the Oilers.

And so is two-time All-Big Eight tight end Jamie Williams. He was Houston's starter and ended up with 13 catches for 158 yards (12.2 average) and three TDs.

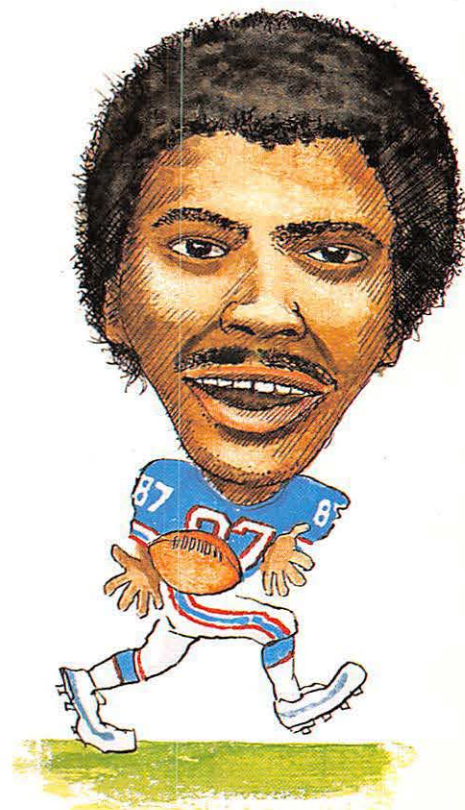
On the roster, but not playing, was former Nebraska safety Allen Lyday who spent the last seven weeks of the season on the injured reserve list.



Danny Noonan's career looks bright, while John Dutton's ended.



Mike Rozier had an all-pro year.



Jamie Williams was one of four Huskers with Houston.



Still, Houston led the league in Husker starters.

Right behind was New England.

The Patriots have two Big Red products on their roster and both are rising stars.

Wingback Irving Fryar, 1983 All-American, has already made quite a name for himself both on the field and off. But Patriot receivers coach and former NFL great Harold Jackson only sees good things in Fryar's pass-catching future.

"When you look at Irving Fryar, you're looking at some of the best talent in the league," says Jackson. Fryar was New England's third-leading receiver in 1987 with 31 receptions and a team-high 467 yards. "And he's still learning. Irving is just getting to the point where he's putting it all together. He's got a lot of years and a lot of big plays ahead of him."

So does nose tackle Toby Williams,

even though he was an unheralded 10th-round draft choice in 1983 and Fryar was the No. 1 player selected in the 1984 draft. The splashiest award Williams ever won at Nebraska was second-team All-Big Eight as a defensive tackle. But for the past two years, he's been the Pats' starting moose at the nose position, and a smart moose at that.

"Everybody in the organization — including Head Coach Raymond Berry — is high on Toby," said New England defensive coordinator Eddie Khayat. "He knows his football. After a full day of practice, Toby'll come in and watch film two or three more hours. He'll find something in there that will help *all* of us, not just him. That's the way he studies the game.

"Here's what I mean about Toby. Two years ago against the Jets, Toby's been at nose for only a couple of weeks. And late in the game they run

a trick play where they handed off to the running back for what looked like a sweep. But he was going to throw it back to the quarterback, who would throw it down field. When you see that, most guys will head for the ball. But Toby took off for that quarterback so fast that it looked like he had been in their huddle. It would have fooled anybody, but Toby sees what's going on out there."

So much for All-American honors and press clippings. Williams had neither, and now Khayat sees a long and bright career for the ex-Husker.

But long and bright football futures can darken quickly at any level when injuries hit, and Nebraska representatives in the pros have had their share.

Take Pittsburgh Steeler offensive lineman Mark Behning, for example. He's been in the pros three years now and played in all 16 games for the

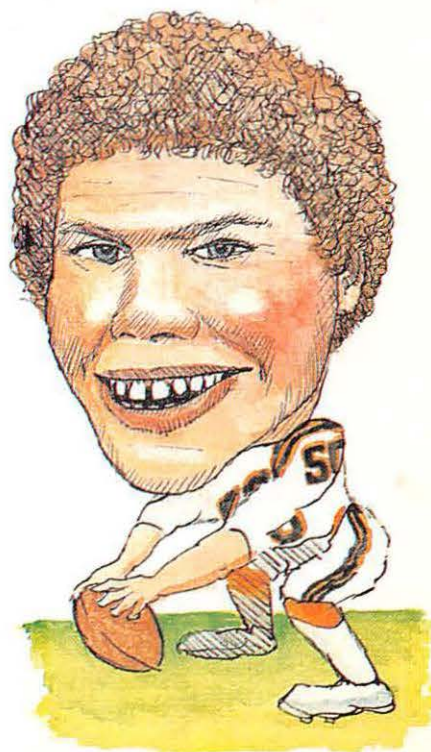


Irving Fryar may still go higher.



Toby Williams gets a lot of pats on the back from the Pats.

Dave Rimington was a wounded Bengal.





Steelers in 1986 as a solid backup. Trouble is, he didn't play in a single game in 1985 and 1987 because of injuries. Glamorous NFL, you bet.

The same injury bug kapooted Bret Clark's 1987 season, as the Atlanta Falcons' starting safety was on the injured reserve list (with a bad ankle) from Sept. 14 on. The year before, Clark had led Atlanta in just about every category for defensive backs. They could have used him in '87; the Falcons were 3-12.

It was almost eight years ago that another defensive back, safety Russell Gary, was winning All-Big Eight honors in 1980 before launching a pro career. After playing for previously hapless New Orleans through 1986, Gary was picked up by the Philadelphia Eagles after the Saints waived him, just before their first-ever playoff

season. Gary was the team's second-leading tackler on special teams and, in the first 10 non-strike games, he also served as the fifth defensive back in Philly's nickel defense. With seven full years of NFL experience, he is Nebraska's senior spokesman in the pros.

Jimmy Williams, Toby's brother, may smash that longevity mark with room to spare if he continues at his current success rate for Detroit. He's Nebraska's defensive star in the NFL. Williams was voted the Lions' defensive MVP in 1987 after he was second on the team in tackles (with 69) and third in QB sacks (with four). He also blocked two punts and knocked down four passes while serving as Detroit's defensive captain. He even got a nice writeup in *Sports Illustrated*.

One former Blackshirt who might

someday challenge Williams for the honor of most celebrated Husker defenseman is Cincinnati end Jim Skow, only two seasons removed from an All-American career under Osborne.

Skow started at right end for the Bengals all year and finished with 27 total tackles and four QB sacks. He's penciled in as a solid starter for the Bengals next year.

Skow can also be a good example of what a typical NFL player has to go through.

"I'd say I've got quite a few good years left in the NFL," he says. "Maybe five or six, hopefully more. The flap about changing coaches here is over, and it looks pretty stable for a while, so I hope I'm still a solid starter for a while."

A solid starter. That's what a lot of



Dean Steinkuhler enjoyed the Oiler playoff march, when he wasn't injured.



Jim Skow was a solid starter for the Bengals.



Roger Craig was the kernel of the Cornfield Backfield.



high school kids and even current Huskers dream about being, even though they don't know the half of it.

"NFL life is a lot of fun, sure, but it's also kind of strange," he says, especially taking into account his family life. "My wife Diana and I live in an apartment in Bellevue during the off-season, and when I go back for next season, we'll probably still just get an apartment across the river in Kentucky." Now, Jim. Please, Jim. Shouldn't big-bucks pro players be out buying five-bedroom houses by the score?

"Maybe, but you know what the NFL can do to you — you can get traded like that," he says. "Easy. It's not like college where you figure you'll stay put for four or five years. So apartments are easier to get rid of than houses. I'll tell you, the money is great and, sure enough, I went out and bought my mom a car after I got in the NFL, but it's kind of unstable.

"Sure, I'd like to buy a house, and the time will be right some day, but for now, it's just me and Lady Di and Cat, the family pet monster. The pro life can kind of be a maverick lifestyle."

And dangerous, too. Several ex-Huskers, including Skow's teammate Dave Rimington, missed a lot of last season with injuries. Solidly entrenched as the Bengals' starting center, Rimington has definitely lived up to his pre-pro hype despite recent nagging foot and knee injuries.

After being a two-time All-American and Outland Trophy winner at Nebraska, Rimington has come on to be "one of the very top centers in the league," according to Bengal Head Coach Sam Wyche.

Bill Lewis is another Nebraska All-American center who struggled with injuries in '87. Lewis plays for the Los Angeles Raiders when he's not injured, and looks to be the starting center next year since he held down the No. 1 spot for eight games this past season when he was healthy. Lewis was an All-American for the Huskers in 1985, and he became a beat-the-odds pro after he made the team, selected in the less-than-encouraging seventh round.

Yet another Husker All-American center, Mark Traynowicz, is still in the NFL, this time in the Lincoln-like weather of Buffalo. Despite winning all-star honors in 1984 as a snapper, Traynowicz doesn't play center for the Bills. Instead, he serves as a handyman replacement at both guard and tackle while also seeing action on special teams and goal-line situations.

However, the most notable of all Husker connections has been made in San Francisco, where two Osborne products start in the same backfield.

"It's our Cornfield Backfield," 49er publicists say of halfback Roger Craig and fullback Tom Rathman. Craig led San Francisco in rushing (with 815 yards) for the third year in a row and led the team in receptions (with 66) for the second time in three years.

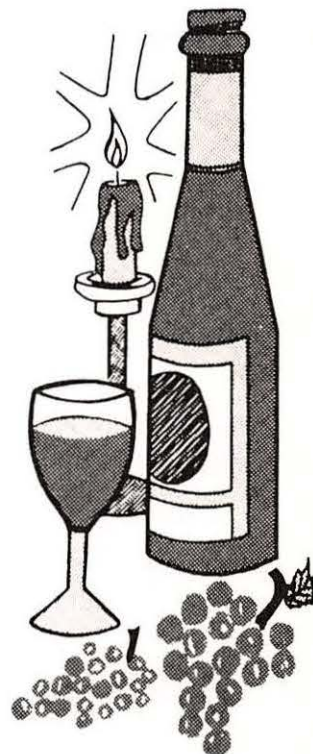
No NFL team may be as dependent on Huskers as the 49ers, 13-2 in the regular season but upset in the NFC playoffs despite being consensus picks for the Super Bowl. Craig began 1987 as the starting fullback with Joe Cribbs at halfback. But Cribbs was extracted from the lineup and replaced by Craig, who was in turn replaced by Rathman. Good ol' Rathman, right out of the traditional Nebraska fullback mold. Well, this traditional Nebraska fullback just happened to have the powerful 49ers' longest run of the season (35 yards).

In only his second year since leaving Lincoln, Rathman was the team's third-leading rusher with 257 yards (4.1 average) and third-leading receiver (with 30 catches). Not bad for a Nebraska running back who caught only four passes in a four-year college career.

But let us not forget the newest 49er. Doug DuBose was a rookie, making the team as a free agent. He finished the season with 33 yards rushing and 37 more passing, which won't make Craig fear for his starter's job, but not bad considering that DuBose struggled with a shoulder injury.

And that pretty much sums up the best and worst of pro football — from ugly injuries to all-pro prestige. With these guys as role models, Nebraska's latest recruits may be just beginning to make a name for themselves. ■

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# Player Point of View

THE ATHLETES TAKE A HARD LOOK AT NEBRASKA FOOTBALL

Fifty-one-year-old redheads can't block or tackle as well as they used to, and that's one reason why it seems odd that Cornhusker fans have spent so much time recently talking about Tom Osborne. Whether fans love him or hate him, it's still the young men on the field who win or lose football games for Nebraska. Since lanky ol' Osborne isn't likely to put a very stout pass rush on UCLA's Troy Aikman, the best indicators of future Husker success are still the players who will rush the quarterback, tackle receivers, block linebackers and generally kick the brains out of folks.

From teen-agers to ancient 23-year-olds, the players have feelings, aspirations and worries that will truly affect Nebraska football. *Huskers Illustrated* recently spoke with Chris Drennan, Morgan Gregory, Mark Blazek and Jake Young about how the players look at key issues.

**Mark Blazek** will be a senior free safety, and was named Academic All-American in 1987, his first year as a starter. After graduating from Valparaiso High School, he walked on in 1984, spent 1985 with the Army National Guard and returned to letter as an alternate in 1986. He was Nebraska's leading tackler in the secondary last year. Blazek is 22.

**Chris Drennan** will be a redshirt junior placekicker, and 1987 was his first season of extensive varsity action. He arrived here in 1985 as a scholarship kicker from Cypress, Calif., saw limited duty that year, sat out 1986, and developed great consistency (hitting all of his 53 PAT's and six of eight field goals) last season. He will be Nebraska's top returning scorer (with 71 points). Drennan is 21.

**Morgan Gregory** will be a junior split end next year, and appears to be a sure bet to replace departed Rod Smith. Gregory, from Denver, alternated behind Smith in 1987 and caught six passes for 58 yards. As a freshman in 1986, he was spectacular for the junior varsity, catching 16 passes and averaging over 20 yards per reception. Gregory turns 20 in April.

**Jake Young** will be a junior center next season, and is regarded as a potential star. After arriving from Midland, Tex., in 1986, he lettered as a freshman and started as a sophomore. With three offensive line starters returning, including the critical posi-

tion of center, the 20-year-old Young is one of many reasons why Nebraska players think the future is bright.

**HI:** Nebraska has a remarkably stable coaching staff. The national media often see this as a tremendous advantage for the program. But from a player's point of view, there might be a down side, say, if a guy simply can't get along with his position coach. With that stability, a player could be looking at four or five years of pure hell. How do the players and coaches generally get along?

**Drennan:** "Sure, we have some players who are not happy, and because they usually deal closely with their position coach, that relationship can sometimes be strained. But I think for the most part, our players get along fine with the coaches."

**Gregory:** "On a scale from one to 10, with one being horrible and 10 being super, I'd say it is an eight. It's a lot more positive than negative. The stability builds up a closer relationship between the two when you know your coach is going to be there throughout your career."

**Young:** "I think everyone gets along well, and we have good player-coach relationships because they're trying to help us get better and you're trying to get better yourself. Everyone's working toward the same goal. One of the reasons I came here was because of the coaching staff."

**HI:** There's an old saying about death and taxes — that these are the only two things that are certain. Another one might be that top players on big-time college football teams will always be hounded by the media. Last year, Nebraska got a ton of ink, both nationally and in the state, and



**Mark Blazek:**  
"Coach Osborne talks to us over and over again, and every time we sit down for a meeting, it seems like we're getting a lecture about agents, academics and drug testing. He's pretty much got it ingrained in the players that dealing with agents early is only going to hurt you."



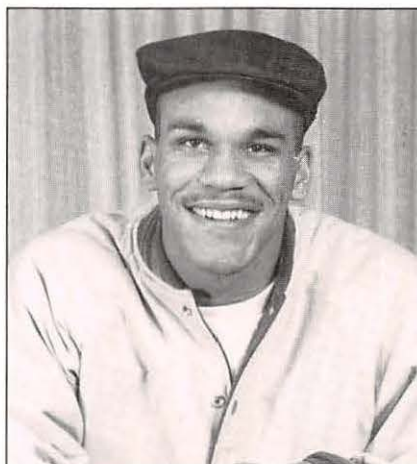
some of it wasn't so nice. Let's talk about the media from a player's standpoint.

**Drennan:** "I guess there was some negative publicity last year because some players got in trouble with the law and because of the summer class deal, but I don't think there is friction between the players and the media, especially the guys from Omaha and Lincoln who we see almost every day in practice. In a lot of ways, we see them as friends. As far as those big stories went last year, the writers were just doing their jobs. I don't think we have any guys here in the media who are out to do a hatchet job on us. Of course, we're all aware of publicity, good or bad. Players read the sports pages like everybody else. We all like to be recognized for our accomplishments, and we all like to have nice things written about us."

**Gregory:** "I don't have any trouble with them, but I know some players have become wary of the media because sometimes the players have done some things that got them in trouble, and things came out in the media worse than they really were. So now, some of the players are wary about what they say to reporters around here. And that's not good or bad. It's just a personal judgement about how a player wants to come across in the paper. If something was made out to look worse than it really was, then a guy naturally is going to have second thoughts about what he says to that reporter the next time."

**Young:** "I think the players relate well with the media. There isn't any vindictiveness on our part. Because of the things that happened at SMU, I think people as fans are more tuned in to the on-goings of college football, and they want to know more and more about it. Therefore, the writers dig deeper and deeper. I don't know if they should or not. There are good and bad points. The players know that people read the sports pages and watch sports on TV. It's not going to come as a shock to anybody who plays football at Nebraska."

**HI:** Probably the biggest off-the-field news item last year was the early signing of college players. Doug



**Morgan Gregory:**  
**"Anything less than that (national championship) is a disappointment, and maybe even more of a disappointment around here because the fans put so much emphasis on the football team."**

DuBose had his name linked with several agent stories. One agent even published a book. Now Craig Heyward of Pittsburgh is leaving school a year early to turn pro. What do players think of the agent issue and pro ball in general?

**Gregory:** "I don't think anybody had a strong opinion on people like Cris Carter at Ohio State when they got caught and couldn't play. I do think the opinion here was that you've got to take care of your own situation. Coach Osborne has stressed to the team the past year to really keep an eye out on those agents."

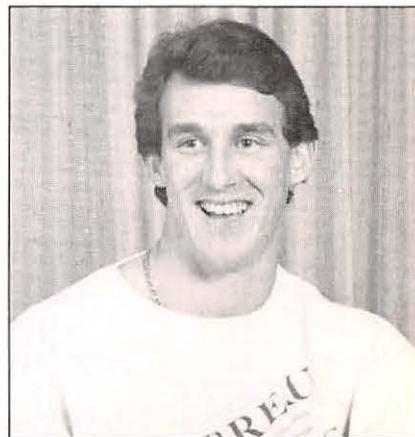
**Young:** "All I ever heard about it was from the papers. I never heard anybody from the team say anything about it."

**Blazek:** "There was a little bit. Not much. I heard some of the seniors talking about it, you know, like if they'd been contacted by an agent. There would be talk about how so-and-so gave them a call, and whether they were even going to return his call or whether they would just hang up the phone on him. You're always going to have players talking to agents, whatever team it is across the country. Coach Osborne talks to us over and over again, and every time we sit

down for a meeting, it seems like we're getting a lecture about agents, academics and drug testing. He's pretty much got it ingrained in the players that dealing with agents early is only going to hurt you."

**Drennan:** "On the pro ball thing, sure, it's exciting to hear the seniors talk about it, and this time of year is really when it comes up. I was talking with Neil Smith in the weight room the other day about pro ball, and it was fascinating. It's a whole new world out there, and here's a teammate of mine who's just a college student like me, and he's about to become a very wealthy man. I don't see anything wrong with dreaming about it or talking about playing in the NFL because that's what so many of us have done since we were kids. And I think our players keep it in perspective with the agent thing and all."

**Gregory:** "Right now during winter conditioning and before spring practice, the NFL is more of a hot topic among the players than even the 1988 season. It's fun. Everybody's got a dream. The seniors who've got a chance at pro ball still stay around the weight room, and we talk with them about how it works. But, you know, there's kind of a sad part — the other guys, the other seniors who aren't going to try it, you know, they just dis-



**Chris Drennan:**  
**"Sure, we have some players who are not happy, and because they usually deal closely with their position coach, that relationship can sometimes be strained."**



appear, and for the most part you just don't see them around anymore."

**HI:** Even though Nebraska has had some notable non-conference games of late, the real excitement here seems to come in November when the Big Eight title and bowl bids are on the line. Looking back and looking ahead, what do the players think of Oklahoma, bowl time and the upcoming season?

**Young:** "Well, this year, I think losing our last two games made everybody feel disappointed because we felt we could have and really should have won both games. You can't say that the other teams weren't good because they were, and they just outplayed us. Everybody feels that we have a lot to prove next year, and with hard work, we'll prove it to everyone. A lot of people were unsure about how good we were last year. Next year,



**Jake Young:**  
"Everybody feels that we have a lot to prove next year, and with hard work, we'll prove it to everyone. A lot of people were unsure about how good we were last year."

we're not hurting at any position. We've got good players at every position, and, frankly, we've got to continue to improve to hold our jobs or move up."

**Blazek:** "It always seemed in the past — the press always talks about it and the players thought so, too — that the coaches would be pretty calm all year, then you get to the Oklahoma game and everyone kind of freaks out. This year, they changed the philosophy. This year, we had a more relaxed attitude. Before, we never really talked about winning the national championship, pointing to this game or that game. This year's approach was, 'Hey, if you want to win the national championship, you've got to win this game.' It was a lot more relaxed, trying to take the same approach we had all year instead of trying to change it."

"Take the 1986 Oklahoma game, for example. They were doing a lot of talking. I think everyone for Nebraska felt we'd really have to play great, and it didn't seem like the attitude was that we could win the game. We gave them such a good game and should have won the game. This year, everyone thought this was our year, and everything had been working right, and everyone thought we'd win, but we came out and just played flat. It's hard to explain."

"Next year? At some key positions where we lost seniors, we've got people who were right there behind them anyway, except at defensive tackle. So, we'll be awfully good again without much change. The program is so traditional, and it's been the same so long with the same coaches and same outlook, there's nothing you're going to do drastically different."

**Young:** "I think we're going to have a very good year. We have quite a bit of experience back, plus we've got some players coming in here who are going to be very good, and I think the competition in spring is going to make everybody better. It should be a good team with a lot of character. It will be the same type of team as last year when we came back from behind to win those times."

**Gregory:** "We're loaded." ■

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**Former Cornhusker** Brian Davis, a rookie cornerback for the Super Bowl champion Washington Redskins, has discovered stereotyping National Football League style.

"When I line up against receivers, they all start to hoot and holler," Davis recently told a reporter. "They go, 'Boy, a white guy. We can go deep now.' I guess it's kind of like when I see a white receiver. I go, 'Oh boy, a great day.'"

Even though Davis is one of the Redskins' fastest players — he ran a 4.27 in the 40-yard dash during training camp — "everybody looks at me and thinks I have to play safety or something because white guys aren't supposed to be able to run," he said.

"I definitely don't think people have accepted me as a cornerback. Why? It's obvious. It's because I'm white. Everybody has always looked at me and thought I wasn't fast enough, that I'd be a safety. You know, the smart white guy who runs the show on the field.

"Hah. Little do they know, but I couldn't run the show. I'm not stupid, but I don't know the game that well."

Davis ranks 10th on the Nebraska football team's all-time list of the fastest 40-yard dash times. The first nine, in order, are:

Keith Jones, 4.33; Dana Brinson, 4.37; Terry Rodgers, 4.38; Irving Fryar, 4.43; Tyreese Knox, 4.44; Jon Kelley, 4.45; Gary Washington and Dennis Watkins, 4.47; Tahaun Lewis, 4.48. Watkins, Lewis and Davis are the only defensive backs on the list.

Brinson, Rodgers, Knox and Lewis all return next season.

**Vance Joseph**, the brother of Nebraska quarterback Mickey Joseph, led Archbishop Shaw High to the Louisiana Class 4A championship this season. Vance, also a quarterback, will be a junior next season. The state championship game played in the Louisiana Superdome.

**Rich King**, the 7-2 freshman from Omaha on Nebraska's basketball team, has been a part-time starter this season for Coach Danny Nee. King, who earned second-team Super-State recognition as a senior at Omaha Burke High, has handled his first col-



**Dana Brinson**

legiate season well.

"The pressure's all been positive as far as I try to look at it. I could let the pressure get to me, I suppose. But it's always nice to have something there," said King. "I just do my best to get by. Sometimes when you're not playing as much as you're used to in high school, you start doubting yourself. You start listening to what other people are saying about your ability. But every great player has critics. Michael Jordan is the greatest player in the world, to me, and he's even got critics. So there's always someone who's going to tear you down."

Coach Danny Nee, of course, isn't one of those people. He's been pleased with King's development. Nee considered redshirting King as he did with Kelly Lively, the 6-11 freshman from Torrington, Wyo.

Despite his size, King "really passes well," said Nee. "That's extremely rare. Things like that I don't think you can coach or teach. He has a real keenness to find the open man. Rich is very team-oriented, very unselfish."

King also has a good shooting touch, although he occasionally tries to get a little too far outside to suit

Nee.

"I think big players can shoot from the outside. Beau Reid's 6-7, and he can shoot it outside," King said. "I like that style. I like to have both aspects of the game. You've got to be more versatile than a one-dimensional player. I practice it (his outside shooting) until Coach Nee comes out and tells me to get inside."

King says his range "in a game, is anywhere from 15 feet on in. Sometimes in high school, I'd take it a little beyond the three-point line even though it didn't count (for three). But realistically, that's not my best shot in a game."

Nee would agree.

**Former Cornhusker I-back** Isaiah Hipp, who earned the distinction as the most famous walk-on in college football when he was playing, has returned to Lincoln and is counseling current players.

"They can easily talk to a coach. But I think with a person who's neutral, they have a different kind of rapport. Sometimes, players look at coaches as THE COACH, not someone they can go and talk with," said Hipp. "I think this will help them go to their (position) coach, sit down and talk with him. I wish there was a type of program like this when I was playing."

Hipp is from Chapin, S.C., and after trying professional football, he went back to his home state and spent four and a half years working with youth offenders and "the problems they have in society. I enjoy being able to talk with kids. I love people," he said.

"A lot of things that have happened to me make me feel grateful and blessed and I'm trying to give that back the best way I can."

**Steve Pederson**, former Cornhusker recruiting coordinator, recently became the recruiting coordinator at Ohio State. Pederson says he applies the same philosophy there that he learned under Coach Tom Osborne at Nebraska. "You can outwork the other guy," Pederson said. "You try to be as thorough as you can and not leave players and their coaches hanging." ■



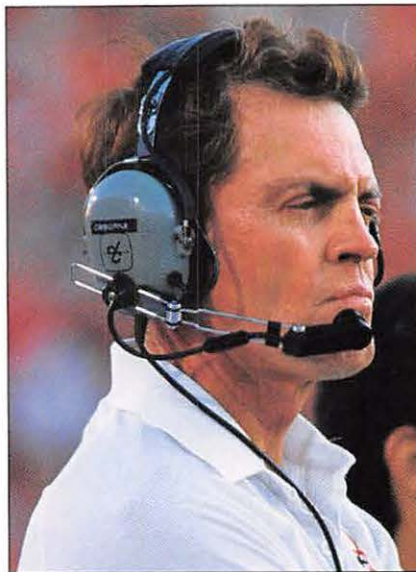
## ASK TOM

*Q: It seems like a real shame that we only get to have graduate assistant coaches for two years and then they have to go somewhere else. Especially with our walkon program, these young men are extra valuable to the program. Could you please explain the graduate assistant coach program at Nebraska and why it is exactly they can only stay for a couple of years? Rex Jenkins, Wichita, Kan.*

*A: "The NCAA has ruled that you are entitled to have five graduate assistants on your team each year. These are young men who already have their undergraduate degrees. They can only stay in your program for two years, and I guess the rule makers feel that if a guy stays on for five or six years there would be pressure to perhaps pay him money and practically make a full-time coach out of him. And, really, the purpose of the graduate assistantship is to get some experience as a college coach and get a master's degree and to move on. So, I guess there is some sense to the two-year rule."*

*Q: I noticed after the Oklahoma game that you asked the players to tone down their quotes in the papers, and that may or may not have been needed. I'm curious, though, if you had some thoughts before the game about saying that to the players. I think it's a sad commentary on our sports society that something like bragging is openly tolerated by winners but it's frowned on when the same players lose. I don't think the bragging by Nebraska players would have been an issue at all if Nebraska had won against Oklahoma. What were your thoughts before the Oklahoma game about the bragging? Cedric Meyers, Omaha*

*A: "I told the players before the game, and even before the season started, that if they can't say something good about somebody then they shouldn't say anything at all. Some of the comments that were interpreted as bragging were really only answers to questions. Somebody asked Steve Taylor if he thought he was a better quarterback than Jamelle Holieway,*



*and his honest answer was yes, and he felt he was. He probably should have said, 'Well, we'll have to see how it goes in the game.' And somebody asked Tom Banderas if he thought we would beat Oklahoma, and he said we probably would. And these were quotes right after the Missouri game. Some of those were answers to questions from the media and were not attempts to brag, even though they were perceived as such."*

*Q: I didn't seem to hear too much about the NCAA meeting this year as far as big changes are concerned and was wondering what you thought were the highlights to come out of the NCAA gathering, mostly on things that will affect Nebraska. Ron Powell, York*

*A: "The one main ruling that came down wasn't really a rule at all. It was approved that the 25-scholarship limit that was supposed to start this spring will be pushed back one year for further consideration. That means we'll still be able to offer a maximum of 30 scholarships this year. I don't think that had much effect on us anyway because the 95 limit is still in effect and we hardly ever give out more than 20 or 22 scholarships each spring anyway. We'll probably still stick with that round figure as well as give some of the more deserving walkons a scholarship, too. Of course, extending the 30-scholarship limit will help a lot of schools that need a quick fix. But*

*it's still going to come up again next year."*

*Q: I would think there could be great change and movement in Nebraska football this spring practice because of what happened last season. I'm very interested in what is going to be done about the secondary and how much further you're going to take the wishbone. It was exciting to see it in the Fiesta Bowl, and I thought it worked well. How are you going to address these major issues in the off-season conditioning and in spring practice? Eric Boyer, Houston*

*A: "Well, first of all, the major issue of spring practice will be to improve at every position. That's what's got to be done every year, regardless. This is the time when the young players will be given their chance to learn a lot and possibly move up. The more experienced players will be asked to work even harder at getting better, and they'd better do that, because there is always someone behind them who'd like their job. We have good people coming back in the secondary. They're fairly experienced, except at strong safety, where we lost two seniors. It will be important for us to make progress at defensive tackle, of course, because we lost some very good players there. We need players to take charge at defensive end and linebacker — we've got a couple of openings there that are important. On offense, both of the running back positions are open, and I expect the competition to be pretty intense. That will be wide open. Plus, the right side of the offensive line will be a key."*

*"We don't expect to be making any wholesale changes, whether it's going to the wishbone or completely overhauling the secondary. Just about every year, we look at adjustments, and we rethink some of our concepts and schemes, but because of the success we've had over the years with our system, I just don't see any violent changes."*

*If you have questions for Coach Osborne, please address them to Ask Tom Osborne, P.O. Box 83222, Lincoln, Neb. 68501. ■*





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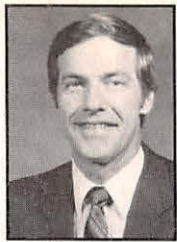
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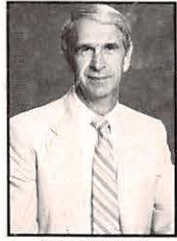
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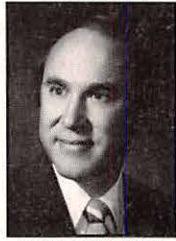
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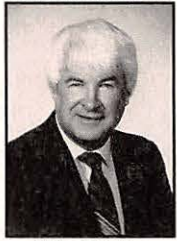
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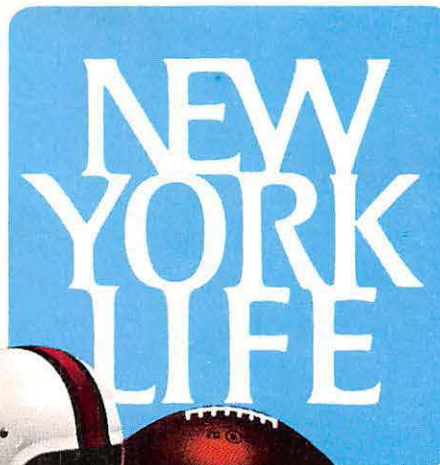
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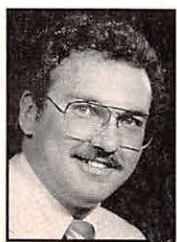
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